

Guardian

by CyXandrix

Category: How to Train Your Dragon, Rise of the Guardians

Genre: Angst, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Hiccup, Jack Frost

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2013-06-04 19:05:48

Updated: 2016-01-25 18:54:38

Packaged: 2016-04-26 15:14:57

Rating: M

Chapters: 18

Words: 85,997

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: The world has knocked Hiccup down so many times he doesn't see the point in getting up again, he'd rather just stay down. Its at that point when an unlikely and very unexpected hand reaches down to help him up. Its then that a Guardian appears to save him. Modern HiJack AU. Rated M for Language and later chapters, Triggers and later chapters. Yaoi.

1. Chapter 1

****Hey there all, so I was browsing Tumblr and I saw a wonderful mini comic thing that inspired me to write this story. This is the first chapter and there will be more to come. Anywho, enjoy ^^****

****Also, trigger warning for this story, if Suicide or self harm is a trigger for you you may want to steer clear. ****

Hiccup walked into the brightly lit school bathroom, the florescent lights glaring off the polished linoleum floor; one in the corner of the room flickered, on the verge of going out. The thin teen smirked at the irony of that thought as he stepped into the large corner stall with the handicap rail that some kid had torn from the wall and locked the door behind him. Walking over to the corner he leaned his back against the cold tile and slowly slid into a sitting position. He set het his book bag in-between his knees and unzipped it, removing two bottles; one clear and full of water the other a solid white. Twisting the childproof cap, Hiccup emptied a handful of the little red pills into his palm; he didn't bother to count, after all what did it matter? Tossing them into his mouth like a kid would candy he downed them with a swig from the water bottle.

As Hiccup sat there, giving the aspirin time to spread through his system he found his mind going over everything, checking one last time he hadn't forgotten anything. He'd given his dad a hug goodbye as he left for school, left the apology in his best (and only if truth be told) friend's locker and burnt the various angry letters

he'd written to his father over the last few months, he didn't want them to be found after. He'd put on a good show that day, smiling to his father and Astrid, laughing at the stupid jokes made at the lunch table, cheering along with the other kids when their biology professor had announced that she was canceling the midterm in favor of an interactive lab; he'd done so well Astrid had commented on his performance, saying it was good to see him acting more like his old self. Of course that made him feel guilty, but then Hiccup was no stranger to guilt these days, not by a long shot, so what was a little more thrown onto the heaping pile of remorse that tormented his every waking moment?

Hiccup put those thoughts out of his head as he removed the iPod from his pack and started wrestling with the knot that had appeared in his headphone's cord. Soon there wouldn't be any more guilt, no more sadness, no more trying to see the point of everything and failing, no more going through every day trying to convince everyone (including, no, especially himself) that his life was worth something just to wake up the next day and do it all over again. No, soon all that would be over. Soon he would be able to rest without his traitorous mind replaying every mistake he had ever made in vivid detail. Soon it would be over.

Hiccup felt a sad smile cross his face as he hit play on his iPod and the soft country-esque rock melody started playing. The razor stung as he drew it up his arm, cutting with the vein, but he continued, repeating the motion twice more before leaning back and closing his eyes as the words started.

I hope you never lose your sense of wonder

You get your fill to eat but always keep that hunger

May you never take one single breath for granted

Hiccup felt tears stinging the corners of his eyes as the voice in his ears shifted to that of his mothers, singing to him like she had when he was little.

God forbid love ever leave you empty handed

I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean

Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens

They hadn't though, every door had closed on him and none had opened, leaving him stranded and alone in the darkness; now he was making his own door and kicking it in.

Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting chance

And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance

He had, he had so many times and every time he had even the smallest bit of hope the world would dash it, smother it out and leaving him lower than he had been. A sense of peace drifted over Hiccup as he felt his mind slowing; soon all over that would be over.

I hope you daaaaaaance

I hope you danceâ€¦!

Darkness.

Jack tossed the hall pass into the trash as soon as he was clear of his 6th hour English class and set his feet for the first floor men's bathroom; from there all he had to do was jimmy open the lock on the window and he was home free. As he walked through the empty hallways he slid his phone from his hoodie pocket and slid it open, fingers typing quickly send sent _got 2 get out of here, u free 2 hang 2day?_ He had barely put the phone into his pocket when it buzzed quietly and he pulled it out again, seeing the name "Sandy" on the screen he slid his finger across the screen and read _You know Jack, one of these days your skipping school is going to catch up with you. Yes I'm free, I'll be seeing you in a bit then?_ Jack shook his head with a small chuckle at his mute friend's texting speed. As he entered the bathroom he started typing _I will nvr get how u can txt so fast in perfect sentences like-_

"Ah shit." Jack cursed as his fingers slipped in his attempt to match Sandy's speed and the phone slid from his grasp, bouncing across the floor and under the wall of the corner stall. Walked over Jack tried the door and found it locked. Feeling slightly awkward he called out.

"Hey, uh, dude? Mind sliding my phone out to me? Is the screen cracked? No, don't tell me, I'll let it be a surprise." He said dryly. After several moments of silence he called again "Hello? Dude in the stall, you there?" Still getting no response Jack drew in an exasperated breath through his nose and was about to let it out when he hesitates, breathing in deeper. He got the usual smells one would expect from a high school bathroom, but overriding that was a coppery, tangy smell that he couldn't quite place though it gave him an uneasy feeling in his stomach. Kneeling down slowly Jack called.

"Hey dude, I'm just grabbing my phone real fast, not trying to peep or en-" Jack's voice caught in his throat and his eyes went wide as his head lowered far enough that he could see under the door of the stall. Sitting there against the wall was a boy about his age with brown hair that hung down to about his shoulders and freckles dotting his face and neck. Jack didn't notice that though, his eyes were drawn to the pool of blood that was slowly spreading from several long gashed in his arm.

"Holy shit holy shit holy shit" Jack repeated as he fought down the panic that was growing in his chest. He took a deep breath to try and calm himself and then took a step back and kicked the door, relief flaring briefly in his chest when the lock gave on the first try and the flimsy panel swung inward. Jack grabbed his phone he dialed 911 as looked down at the deathly pale face of the teen. "Sorry about this, you'll thank me some day I promise."

"911, what's your emergency?"

"There's a guy here, can't be more than like 17, real skinny and, and I think he's trying to kill himself, there's blood all over and his arm's all cut up and-"

"Sir, I'm going to need you to take a deep breath and calm down alright?"

Jack did just that, sucking in a deep breath before letting it out, and while his heart was still hammering, his voice was calmer as he spoke "Alright."

"Good, does he appear to be breathing?" Jack looked and saw the faint rise and fall of the boy's chest under his shirt.

"Yes, but it's really shallow."

"Alright sir, help is on the way, stay on the phone with me until they get there and tell me if his condition changes at all." Jack swallowed and nodded before remembering he was on the phone and said.

"Alright." He wasn't going anywhere.

**There you go! Let me know how much you love me, or hate me, or whatever with a lovely review, they all mean so much you! ^^ See everyone soon ^^ **

2. Chapter 2

Holy crap long chapter is long . This one just kept going and going every time I thought I was getting to a good stopping point for the chapter. ANYwho, I had a great time writing this one, hope you all enjoy reading it just as much ^^

Hiccup was sitting up in the hospital bed that he had, to his great surprise and annoyance, woken up in earlier that morning, wired up to a mass of machines that all beeped or booped in a rhythmic symphony that grated on his nerves more and more each minute he was stuck here. He kept his expression blank as he stared across at his dad who was standing at the foot of his bed staring back at him, same place he'd been standing since the doctor's declared Hiccup well enough for visitor's nearly an hour ago. Several times he had opened his mouth seeming about to say something but each time he had closed it and fallen back into the awkward silence that stretched between them. Hiccup certainly wasn't going to offer anything up, he was in no mood for any conversation with his dad, awkward lecturey affairs that they always were, and he was sure this one would be the worst one yet.

Finally after another fifteen minutes of silence and one large fortifying breath, his father spoke. "Look Hiccup, I uh, I know things have been difficult, since your mom, well-"

Hiccup spoke sharply cutting over his father's halting speech. "Can we not talk about this right now? I'm not really feeling up to it at the moment." Hiccup looked away as he spoke; his fists clenching his sheets subconsciously caused him to wince as his right arm throbbed. The doctor had told him they had sewn up the worst of his 'injuries' and then wrapped his arm in at least ten pounds of gauze and bandaging; despite that and the morphine his right arm still throbbed dully all the time, and no so dully if he ever tried to move use it.

His father looked at him for a moment before nodding, "Alright son, we can talk later." They stared at one another for a long moment before he spoke again, his voice sounding strained and awkward. "I've got to get back to work, I'll be back later, and I'm sure Gobber will want to stop by with me." Hiccup nodded in response, making a vague noise of acceptance, and watched his father's back as he left the room. With a sigh Hiccup leaned back against as the mass of pillows the nurse, a young woman who Hiccup felt was far perkier than the situation warranted, had propped him up with before his dad had been shown into the room. He was going to be here for at least the rest of the week if not longer recovering, and they had him on suicide watch; he supposed he understood that but that didn't make it any less aggravating, now he'd have to wait until he was discharged to try again.

His thoughts shifted to the random Good Samaritan, some kid from his school, who had found him and called the police. According to the doctor Hiccup had been 'extremely lucky' if this kid had been even a little slower it 'might have been too late.' Hiccup sighed, he knew the kid was probably doing what he thought was right, but he honestly wished he'd just minded his own business; it would have made things a lot simpler for him. Hiccup groaned softly as his arm gave a particularly painful throb as he leaned father back into his pillows, figuring he might as well get some sleep seeing as there wasn't much else to do here. He had just close his eyes when he heard the doorknob click and the door swing open.

Jack looked down as his phone buzzed, Sandy's name popping up in the notification _You know you're the last person he's going to want to see. From what you said it seemed less like a cry for attention and more like the real thing._ Jack sighed as he looked around the waiting room of Berk Memorial Hospital, shifting in the less than comfortable chair he'd been sitting in for the last couple hours. Looking back to his phone he tapped out _Ya, I doubt he wants to see me. What are the chances that's going to stop me?_ Jack clicked the phone shut and waited exactly seven seconds before getting the response _Hold on, let me call you and answer that. Just be careful Jack, don't push._ Jack smiled at his phone before the happy expression fell from his face as he thought back to the previous day in the school bathroom. The EMTs had told Jack that he'd called just in time and that the guy, Haddock they'd called him, which Jack assumed was a last name, was going to be ok. Still he was a small kid, and there had been a lot of blood on the floor, Jack hadn't been able to help but worry. Jack had spent the rest of the day there at the hospital and had started to complain about leaving when visiting hours were ending. He had actually refused to leave, feeling rather foolish considering he didn't even know the kid's first name, until one of the nurses told him that the boy was out of surgery and that he had so many drugs in his system at the moment he wouldn't be waking up any time soon so he'd reluctantly gone home.

First thing the next morning he'd headed straight to the hospital, no thought of school in his head as he sat down in the same chair he now occupied. It had been a good hour after that that an extremely large man sporting a massive red beard had arrived and introduced himself to the receptionist as Stoick Haddock. Jack had been shocked at first, after all Mr. Haddock was huge and his son was, well, not; it looked like the two shared about as much blood as Jack did with his own adoptive father. It had been a bit over an hour now since a nurse had informed the man his son was awake (not that Jack had been

eavesdropping or anything), so now he was just waiting for his to return. He jumped in surprise as his ring tone sounded from his pocket; glancing at his phone he saw 'As(s)ter' on the screen accompanied with a picture of a tanned fist with middle finger standing tall.

Sliding the answer bar across the screen he brought the phone to his ear "Hey, whats up?"

"Mum knows ya skipped school today." Said a thick Aussie accent from the other end of the phone, the voice seemed to be suppressing a laugh.

"Shit, how steamed is she?"

"Well, when she spotted ya walking down the street she was bout ready to putcha in the hospital, what with the last time and all, until she saw ya going into the hospital yerself. Now she's flippin her shit thinkin yer hurt or hooked on somthin, you know how she gets." Jack sighed as he ran a hand over his face; he knew exactly how his adoptive mother could get and knowing her she had already ran through every possible worst case scenario possible.

"You told her not to worry, that I'd always come to her or dad if something was wrong?"

" 'Course. "

"And did it work?"

" 'Course not. "

"Of course not." Jack echoed with a sigh, he hadn't wanted to tell his family about what had happened the previous day just yet, but there was no helping it now. As quickly and succinctly as possible Jack told Aster about finding the Haddock boy, getting questioned by the medics, the principal, the police, and spending most of yesterday and now today in the hospital waiting room. When Jack finished he waited for Aster to react in some way, unconsciously holding his breath.

After a moment Aster spoke, his voice slightly cautions. "You alright Jack?"

Jack couldn't help a small smile as he responded "Yes, I'm fine."

Aster's voice was back to normal when he spoke again "Good, only ask cause, well ya know."

"Ya, I know," Jack said, and then added in a slightly quieter voice, "Thanks."

"Any time Frostbite, you know that. So did you plan on telling mom and dad?"

"Of course, I was going to tell them tonight. I just wanted to see him first."

"Why? Did you know 'im?"

"Not really, I mean I'd seen him around school sure, he hangs out with the Hofferson girl a lot, but I honestly didn't even know his name till they told me-still don't know his first name actually. And I'm not really sure whyâ€|" Jack said trailing off; He knew why he wanted to be here, needed to be, but it wasn't really a discussion he wanted to get into with Aster at the moment.

"Uh-hu, why don't I believe ya?" Jack sighed, most times he liked how close he and his brother were and how well they knew each other-this was not one of those times.

"I figured it might do him some good to have someone here, you know, a friend." Jack said, letting some sarcasm tint his voice as he spoke.

"Yer planning on being his friend? Dontcha think the poor boys suffered enough?"

"Oh hardy har har." Jack said, his voice dry. He was about to deliver a sharp comeback when he saw the hulking form of Mr. Haddock emerge from the hallway. "Hey, I got to go, tell mom I'm fine and I'll explain everything when I get home tonight."

"Alright, I'll do my best."

"Thanks, bye Cottontail."

"Bye Frostbite."

Slipping his phone into his pocket Jack stood and walked cautiously over toward Mr. Haddock, trying not to let the man's size intimidate him. Jack waited at a respectful distance until Mr. Haddock was done speaking with the receptionist, his voice too low for Jack to hear, and then approached, raising a hand in greeting.

"Uh, Mr. Haddock?" Jack said questioningly. It took the large man a moment to respond, and when he did he looked Jack up and down before responding.

"Yes, what c'n I do for you son?" He answered in an accent that Jack couldn't quite place.

"Hi, My name is Jack, Jack Frost and-" Jack said, extending his hand which Mr. Haddock took and was about to shake when he stopped and looked at Jack.

"Frostâ€|your tha boy who, eh, foundâ€|" He faltered, waving a large hand at least as large as Jack's face in search of the right words.

Jack spared him the trouble by nodding and saying "Ya."

Mr. Haddock nodded as well and shook Jack's hand firmly, his grip even stronger than Jack's own father, which was saying something. "Thank you, I don't know how t' repay you."

Jack waved his hand quickly smiled "Anyone would've done the same thing." He said before pressing one. "How is he?" Mr. Haddock let out a sigh as he leaned back slightly, towering over Jack even more now,

before speaking.

"He's awake. The doctors say he will be fine with some rest." A little wash of relief flared in Jack at the news and he quickly asked his next question.

"Would it be alright if I saw him?" Jack said and then quailed slightly at the appraising look the incredibly large and intimidating man in front of him leveled at him.

He did his best not to fidget and to hold the larger man's gaze until, after several long moments Mr. Haddock said "I don't see why that would be a problem. He's in room 109 down that way." He said, gesturing down the hall he had just recently emerged from "Now, if you'll excuse me I've got to get back to the plant. Glad to meet you Jack."

"You too Mr. Haddock, and thank you." Jack said with a smile, accepting another finger crushing handshake before the large man turned and headed for the entrance. Jack himself turned and headed down the hall. He stopped outside the door marked 109, took a deep breath, and turned the knob.

Hiccup didn't bother to open his eyes as he let out an exasperated sigh, clearly his dad didn't get the whole 'don't want to talk' thing. At the sound of the closing door Hiccup spoke, not bothering to hide the annoyance in his voice "Ya, still not in the mood." He started as a voice that was light, interested, and clearly not his father's responded.

"Not in the mood for what?" Hiccup opened his eyes and tried to sit up, scrunching his eyes closed and gritting his teeth as another wave of pain flared from his arm, he'd have to ask the nurse for more morphine. As he slowly settled himself into a sitting position and pried his eyes open, blinking away the slight moisture that had formed in the corners, he was met by a very unexpected sight. There, lounging in one of the chairs against the far wall of his room and looking for all the world like he owned it, was a young man no older than himself. He was taller than Hiccup by about a head and just as thin if not thinner, his dark blue hoodie hung loosely on his thin shoulder and his khaki pants clung to his legs like they were painted on. The most unique feature of the boy had to be the shock of messy white hair that fell haphazardly about his face, bangs stopping just above a pair of piercingly blue eyes the color of a frozen pond. A close second had to be a pair of those toe-shoe things Hiccup had seen around on occasion. A look of concern spread across his face and he sat up slightly at Hiccup's wince and he asked "Are you alright?"

"Ya, fine." Hiccup said doing his best to keep the confusion off his face, an impressive feat considering the complete stranger sitting in his room and looking honestly concerned about him. "Uh, don't take this the wrong way but, who on earth are you and what the hell are you doing in my hospital room?" Hiccup wasn't sure what he had expected in response to his question, but it certainly was not for this far too happy intruder to break into a broad smile, laugh, and jump up to take a sweeping bow.

"Jack Frost, at your service." With that he flopped back into the chair and turned so he lay across it sideways. There was a low buzz

from his pocket, which he removed a phone from, read the message with a slight frown and started tapping out a response. All the while Hiccup just stared, trying to figure out that Jack was doing here. He knew the name, he had heard it announced over the schools intercom often enough, usually accompanied with a 'please come to the principal's office' but he couldn't remember seeing Jack around school much, not that he paid much attention to most of the kids at his school, but he couldn't remember having a single class with Jack and had certainly never spoken with him. So what was he doing here, how had he even know Hiccup was in the hospital? Astrid was the only person he had expected to know or care and she hadn't even been to see him yet (he was dreading that visit and the chewing out that would likely accompany it). The only explanation Hiccup could come up with was that that news of hisâ€¦incidentâ€¦had already spread over the entire school. That idea certainly was not comforting, it would likely mean funny looks, some shallow sympathy from a bunch of people who'd never spoken to him before, and just attention in general, something Hiccup was not exactly fond of to say the least- If he had the choice between a leading role or a stage hand he'd choose being at home.

His voice exasperated Hiccup asked "Has news really spread that fast?"

"Ummâ€¦what?" Jack said with a small laugh in his voice, looking at Hiccup in confusion.

"Well I figured the whole school must be talking about it, how else would you know about it? Still doesn't explain what you're actually doing here." Hiccup said, partially to Jack and partially to himself, his voice turning into an accusation at the end. Jack's expression fell slightly as Hiccup's words and he rubbed the back of his neck with one hand, looking away from Hiccup as he spoke.

"No, well I mean I haven't been at school today but I doubt anyone really has any details yet. No, I was, uh, Iâ€¦" Jack's speech was hesitant as his eyes raised to watch Hiccup cautiously, his face still pointed away. "I was the one who, uh, found you." Hiccup froze as Jack looked up at him slowly, gauging his reaction; his mind seemed to have stopped working, the normally active and agile organ suddenly stuttering and slow. More than a little of Hiccup was suddenly angry with Jack, after all who's asked him to come and stick his nose in something that was none of his business.

After a moment Hiccup was able to manage a lame "Ohâ€¦" before slipping into silence again.

"You don't have to thank me." Jack said, the sincerity in his voice was the only thing that kept the venom out of Hiccup's reply.

"I wasn't planning on it." He said, his voice flat instead.

"I didn't think you were, just didn't want you feeling obligated to or anything." Jack said, and there again was the honest sincerity as he gave Hiccup a small smile.

"Ah, well thanks then-for that I mean." Hiccup said, earning him a wide smile and a small laugh from the lanky teen across from him and damn it if he couldn't help a small smile himself. There was something about this Jack guyâ€¦ "Well," he said, his voice more than

a little sarcastic "third times the charm; what are you doing in my hospital room? No long thought out plans to get in the way of today?"

Jack winced slightly as Hiccup's remark before saying "Friendly concern?" Hiccup raised an eyebrow, clearly not convinced, Jack chuckled. "I'm not exactly new to this wholeâ€¦ thing, and I know it can be nice to have someone around to talk to that understand that, _no_ you don't want to talk about it thanks." Jack said, his voice taking on a patronizing tone at the end like he was talking to a nosy visitor. "Oh, and that reminds me, I don't actually know who you are, er, exactlyâ€¦ your name that is." His tone became a bit awkward at the end.

"Hmh, my name is Hiccup." Hiccup leaned back and examined Jack, trying to decide if he believed him or not. He couldn't think of any reason Jack would lie to him, and to be honest it might be nice to have some company other than his thoughts for a while. "Alright Frost, I suppose you can stay." Hiccup's neutral expression cracked into a small smile as Jack gave an extremely over exaggerated expression of joy, bringing one hand flat against both his cheeks. Hiccup snorted and rolled his eyes for the first, but certainly not last time that day.

Hiccup had always been pretty good at reading people, it was a skill one developed when you spent most of your time in the background watching others, but he could not for the life of him read Jack. As far as Hiccup could tell he was just a goofy kid who though he'd like some company but come on, that couldn't be the end of it, could it? Hiccup had learned the hard way that any time someone was friendly to him, there was some sort of ulterior motive, something they wanted from him; the one exception to that rule had been Astrid, but this was completely different. Jack did most of the talking, lounging in the chair he had claimed as his domain in the small room, while Hiccup just listened and tried to work out just what was in this for Jack.

After a brief pause Hiccup said "I've seen you around school before, but I don't remember ever taking classes with you, of did you just skip them all?" Jack chuckled and started talking about his classes. It turned out that they had a lot of the same classes, just not in the same hours. Hiccup was in more advanced Math and English classes then Jack and Jack was taking a gym class that Hiccup wasn't but other than that their schedules were pretty similar. After nearly two solid hours of talking Jack's jaw finally seemed to get tired because he grabbed the remote to the small TV mounted on the corner of the ceiling and flipped it on. _This week on Teen Mom_-

"Would you-"

"Is it alright-"

Both boys stopped, having spoken at the same time, and looked at each other expectantly. After several second of silence Jack said "Please tell me you weren't about to ask me to leave this?"

The combination of the comment and the cautiously incredulous look on Jack's face struck Hiccup as funny and he found himself laughing, really laughing, for the first time in he couldn't even remember. "N-N-No," He laughed out "go ahead and change it."

"Oh good," Jack said as he began flipping through channels "I was worried for your taste in TV for a second there."

They passed another two hours with a lengthy discussion about their favorite TV shows, movies, and books (Jack's impassioned arguments that comic books were books finally won out over Hiccup's objections). Hiccup was surprised to learn just how much he and Jack had in common; they both loved fantasy though Hiccup preferred High Fantasy, if it had dragons in it he'd probably read it, while Jack liked more modern fantasy. They both enjoyed super heroes and spent an enjoyable while debating the merits of various heroes and villains, their powers and inevitably what power they would want (Jack said flying, Hiccup invisibility). During that time a nurse came into the room to change Hiccup's IV, check his vitals and just generally check up on him.

Not long after that their conversation was interrupted by a low rumble, Hiccup looked away blushing as he brought his good hand to his rumbling stomach.

"Sounds like someone's hungry!" Jack said with a chuckle as he stood and stretched, his shirt riding up slightly to expose a flat stomach, not that Hiccup was looking. "How bout I go see if I can find something for lunch?"

"You don't have to, I'm not that hungry." Hiccup said his eyes trailing to the floor, a slight blush coloring his cheeks as his stomach contradicted him with another low growl.

"Haha, sure you're not," Jack said with a chuckle "I'll be back in a bit." With that he crossed the room and opened the door, giving Hiccup one more smile before the door closed behind him. Hiccup was left sitting there, feeling oddly light and thinking how very unexpected this day had turned out so far.

As Jack pulled the door shut behind him he pulled the phone from his pocket, wincing at he saw eleven missed calls and fifteen new messages; he had expected as much, he'd silenced his phone for just this reason, but he still felt bad worrying his mom so much. Scrolling to the top of the list he started reading.

Mom: Hey sweetie, how's school?

Mom: Can you call me between classes?

_Mom: Alright I know you skipped school Jack, please call me.

_

Mom: Ignoring me isn't going to make this better for you.

Mom: If you're not going to answer your phone I don't see the purpose of you having one.

_Mom: In case you didn't get it, that's was a threat. _

Sandy: Jack, your mom has text me three times looking for you, call her.

Mom: Jack I need to talk to you NOW!

Mom: If you don't answer this next call I'm coming to find you.

Aster: Dude, moms pissed, like I hvnt seen her this steamed since dad forgot valentine's day. She says shes coming to find you, don't worry I took her keys.

Mom: My keys are missing, pretty sure Aster took them, don't think I don't know that was you're doing young man. You had better hope you call me before two or there will be hell to pay.

Sandy: She just called me, she sounds worried. Also she called me like she expected an answerâ€¦| call her would you?

Aster: Alright Jack, she's digging through my room for her keys now, please call her. Preferably before she gets to the top drawerâ€¦|

Aster: Well too late, thanks for thatâ€¦|

_Mom: You better have a damn good reason that I shouldn't kill you when you get home. _

Jack covered his eyes and sighed as he read the last of the messages, dragging his hand across his face in exasperation. Taking a deep breath he scrolled to him mother's contact and hit dial, waiting for the call to connect as he scanned the various signs adorning the hallway walls, looking for some indication which way the cafeteria was. His phone rang exactly .3 times before it picked up and a shrill voice was speaking.

"You'd better have a damn good explanation for skipping school to go to the hospital and then _ignoring me_ when I try and get ahold of you. I mean seriously Jack, that's why you _have_ a phone! Do you have any idea how worried I've been, I tried Sandy and he couldn't tell me anything and you weren't answering me!" When she finally stopped to draw in a breath Jack took the opportunity to cut in, knowing he wouldn't get another any time soon.

"I'm really sorry Mom, I didn't mean to ignore you, I was just in the middle of something here so I turned my phone off so it wou-" Jack's words seemed to jolt his mother's memory because she spoke over him then, talking so fast she would have lost any ordinary listener, Jack was used to the speed though and caught every word.

"Oh ya! What on earth were you doing at the hospital sweetie? Are you hurt, were you doing _it_ again because-"

"No Mom, I promise that's not it." Jack said, cutting his mother off before she could go down that particular line of conversation. Before he could say anything else though she was off again.

"Is it drugs, because if it is Jack we-" Jack cut her off again, he knew she would assume a worst case scenario like this.

"No Mom I-"

"Are you worried you caught something? Jack we talked about being safe, I thought you-"

"Ugh! MOM! No, god no, would you just listen for a second?!" Jack said, his voice rising in exasperation. He certainly had talked with his mother at length about 'being safe' and he had absolutely no desire to relive what he held as the most uncomfortable two hours (two freaking hours) of his life. "There's this guy wh-" Jack was about to start explaining when his mom went off again.

"A guy? You ignored me for a guy! If you're ignoring me for a guy it better be George Clooney and you'd best be warming him up for me!"

"Mom!" Jack said, suppressing a chuckle "Listening means not talking for more than five seconds." Jack waited to see that the silence from the phone would last before starting again "There's this guy, he's here becauseâ€¦" and Jack gave his mother the same explanation as he'd given Aster, waiting for her reaction with baited breath as he finished. She was quiet for so long that Jack checked the phone twice to see if the call had dropped and was about to say something when she finally spoke.

"Are you alright Jack?"

"Yes mom, I'm fine." Jack said, smiling as he spoke. A smile was evident in his mother's voice as well when she next spoke.

"Well, I'm glad you're there then Jack. Be safe and be home before curfew."

"Yes mom, I will be."

"Good, and don't think you're not in trouble for skipping class still." Said in a teasing tone. "I love you Jack."

"I love you too mom, I'll call you when I'm heading home." With that Jack hung up the phone and, after tapping out quick apologies to Aster and Sandy, slipped the phone back in his pocket. A smile still painted on his face Jack redoubled his efforts in locating the cafeteria; after all, he had lunch to find.

Hiccup sat on his bed, his brain once again pondering the curious phenomenon that was Jack Frost. While plenty revealing of Jack's admittedly good taste in entertainment, their surprisingly easy and long conversation had given no insight into what was in the visit for Jack, and there had to be something. Still, when they had been talking Jack had seemed so at ease, he'd seemed content to just enjoy the conversation and lounge in his chair. Those thoughts quickly brought just how easy their conversation had been to the forefront of Hiccup's mind. Hiccup was not a social person, he was good as faking it briefly when required but he was actually quite awkward around new people stuttering and pausing and wishing for the conversation to be over, and yet with Jack that wasn't the case he justâ€¦.talked.

Hiccup's internal musings were interrupted about twenty minutes after Jack left by the clicking of the door.

"That was quick, any trouble finding the-ow-oof!" Hiccup started speaking but stopped as not Jack, but Astrid, walked into the room. His speech was further interrupted as she rushed at him; the hard

punch to his shoulder he had expected, the uncomfortably tight hug that followed, not so much.

Wincing as his arm was jostled Hiccup said "Hey Astrid, shouldn't you be in school?"

"I left early, couldn't really concentrate so I told the nurse I felt sick and came here." She said, pulling away and fixing a surprisingly cold look on Hiccup.

Quailing under her glare Hiccup said "There's some wonderful irony there if you think about it for a-" He said in an attempt to break the unusual tension when Astrid cut him off.

"What the hell were you thinking? How could you do something like this Hiccup! I thought you were smarter than pulling something so incredibly stupid I mean, what were you hoping to accomplish?" Hiccup felt his face fall into a blank mask as Astrid started berating him, all the thoughts that had been pushed from his mind flooding back to the forefront, demanding attention. He didn't know how to answer, he didn't want to answer, he didn't want to think about it; thinking about it was what led to his current situation. "I th-ahg what the hell?! Let go of me I swear I'll-" Hiccup stared dumbfounded as Astrid was pulled backwards, the abrupt movement revealing Jack, his face hard with anger and his fist clapped firmly around Astrid's ponytail as he pulled her from the room. Hiccup couldn't bring himself to do more than stare like an idiot at the plain wood door as it slammed shut, taking Jack and Astrid from his view. He waited for—what? Shouting? An alarm of some sort? Jack's unconscious body to come flying through the door?

Hiccup wasn't sure what he had expected, but it certainly wasn't Jack and Astrid to come walking calmly back into the room, bones intact, teeth all in place and face's unbruised. There was an uncomfortable silence for a moment before Astrid spoke. "So, how are you feeling Hiccup?" Hiccup could only stare, looking back and forth between the blond girl before him and the white haired boy currently busying himself over several plastic food trays that had been forgotten in—whatever that was, still too shocked to respond.

After a long moment Hiccup said "Hungry actually, you?"

"Ah, well that won't be a problem much longer," said a rather pleased looking Jack as he turned around with a large tray filled with at least six different kinds of food from chicken to lasagna to a fruit-cup "I didn't know what you like, so I kinda just got some of everything." He said, looking slightly abashed.

"It looks great." Hiccup said as Jack placed the food in front of him, smiling up in thanks. He tried to remember the last time he ate anything as he unwrapped the plastic spork and single obligatory napkin; the last time he remembered eating was dinner two days ago, the mere thought making him even hungrier. Finally extricating his spork from its plastic prison Hiccup set into the lasagna with gusto, downing three bites before he even fully tasted, much less chewed, it.

All in all Hiccup had to admit the food wasn't that great, he'd had far worse in his school cafeteria or anything that his father cooked whenever the urge took him, which was mercifully infrequent, but he

had also had far better, he knew he could cook most of the food better than this himself. Still, he was starving and he finished off everything Jack had brought for him and a portion of the meal Jack had bought for himself to. Finally putting down his spork Hiccup muffled a burp as he lay back against the pillows that propped him up, feeling full and content.

"Hey Hiccup, look!" Jack said with a grin. When Hiccup looked over to him he said "Da da da da da da da da da da da da da da SPORKMAN!" he sang, holding up his spork at the end, off which he had broken the middle two prongs, with what Hiccup could only describe as pride. Hiccup let out an unwilling laugh even as he covered his face with a hand.

"I cannot believe you went there." Hiccup said with a fake moan.

"You have no idea how far I might go." Jack said with a wink. Hiccup's stomach gave a strange littleflip and he wondered if perhaps it wasn't the best idea to eat that second burger.

Lunch taken care of the Jack started talking about how terrible to food had been and Hiccup joined in his lamenting, adding his own observations when appropriate. Before long they were talking about recipes and their favorite foods, Astrid joining in the conversation after a few minutes of sitting in silence. The topic of conversation shifted from food (smoked salmon for Hiccup, Tacos for Jack and Pasta for Astrid) to favorite desserts (Chocolate mousse, Apple-pie and lemon ice respectively), and through a dozen other subjects as the conversation went on. Hiccup was shocked when the nurse came in tall Jack and Astrid that visiting hours were over, the time had gone faster than Hiccup could remember it going in months.

"I hope you feel better soon Hiccup." Astrid said as she walked over and gave him a brief hug.

"Ya, feel better Hiccup, try not to get food poisoning." Jack said with a grin as he pulled an aggrieved face that made Hiccup chuckle. He walked over to Hiccup and Hiccup made to hold out his arm for a handshake or a high five or a fist-bump or whatever. Instead Jack ducked down and wrapped his arms around Hiccup's shoulder's squeezing briefly before withdrawing and heading toward where Astrid and the nurse waited, turning and waving to a frozen Hiccup who barely managed to smile back before the two were ushered out of the room. Hiccup sat there for quite some time, staring at the door, his only thought that he very much hoped this would not be the last time he'd see Jack frost.

The rest of the evening passed uneventfully, his father came back around eight, bringing with him Hiccup's backpack which he said the school had asked he pick up. They sat uncomfortably for a while, he asked how Hiccup's day had been and Hiccup answered fine (which was true for a change), gave well wishes as well as an apology and promise to visit soon from Gobber and wished Hiccup a goodnight before heading out. That left Hiccup with just his thoughts for company, and they didn't make very good company these days. Hiccup let out a sigh as he laid back in his pillows, preparing to attempt to sleep, a prospect that seemed highly unlikely. What with the unfamiliar surroundings, the constantly beeping machines, and the thoughts that had been kept at bay all day but were not back full

force. This was going to be a long night.

There you have it, not much to say sept hope you liked it ^^ Let me know how much you liked it with a review cause I live off those thing ^^

3. Chapter 3

Ok, first off sorry this took soooo long, the chapter kinda got away with me and I've been dealing with some real life drama that kinda killed my will to write for a bit -- if its any consolation, this chapter is the longest single things I've ever written by double! No joke. I honestly probably should have broken it into at least two chapters but by the time I can to that realization I was half way through editing it -- I way underestimated how much time it would take to do each of the scenes I'd envisioned for this chapter (this isn't even all of them, I originally had three more really big ones that I moved to chapter 4 now). Anyway, enough of my apologies, on to the chapter! ^^

The atmosphere in the hallway outside was heavy and awkward as Jack and Astrid left Hiccup's room, though he supposed it was to be expected considering the last time they'd been alone in this hallway. Jack admitted to himself that he may have overreacted slightly when he walked into the Hofferson girl shouting at Hiccup, not that he would have done much differently either way, and he was glad he'd trusted his instincts and ducked when he'd finally gotten her out into the hallway because she did take a couple swings at him. Now he half expected her to take another as she rounded on him, a fiery gleam in her eyes.

"Alright Frost, I don't know what your game is but you're going to tell me. Now." She accentuated her point by jamming Jack in the chest with her finger far harder than he felt was strictly necessary.

"What do you mean game?" Jack said, confusion and slight exasperation creeping into his voice, seriously why did everyone seem to think he had some secrete agenda?

"With Hiccup. As I'm sure you realize, he's in a bad place right now. If you're honestly here as a friend then good," Astrid hesitated for a moment, like she was deciding whether or not to continue before pressing on. "I haven't seen him as genuinely happy as he was today in months."

Jack suppressed a smirk at the comment, feeling this wasn't the best time to be breaking into a smile, and said , "Honestly, there's no 'game', I just understandâ€¦" Jack's words drifted off for a moment as his thoughts shifted to less pleasant subjects before he jerked them back to attention. "I thought he could use a friend-not that you're a bad friend, I just meant-" Jack stopped and held his hands up soothingly as he started over "I'm not playing any game, I swear."

"Good." Astrid said with a pleasant smile. Her face shifted to one of fiery determination as she closed in so her face was on inch from Jack's. "Because if you _are_ playing games with him, if Hiccup gets hurt, I will personally hunt you down, beat you within an inch if

your life, and strangle you with your own nutsack, got it?" With that she spun on her heel and strutted down the hall, through the waiting room, and out of Jack's sight. The only thought he had as he watched that blond hair walking away was complete certainty that she would make good on her threat. It didn't bother Jack though, after all he didn't have any intentions of hurting Hiccup. He just wanted to be a friend so someone who needed it, 'pay it forward' as they said.

The sun had set and a light wind, still warm but with the promise of cooler temperatures soon, blew through Jack's hair as he walked up to the large gate and waved to the guard in the gate house, a giant man with so much hair Jack couldn't see any skin on what little of him wasn't covered by his uniform. He said something in an incredibly thick Russian accent that Jack recognized as 'Hello'

"Hey Phil, Mom and Dad home?" The large man nodded an affirmative and Jack sighed before waving. "Alright, thanks. Have a good night Phil." He waited while Phil opened the gate wide enough for him to walk through then set off up the long driveway to his house. Even after living here for nearly five years Jack sometimes still had a moment of disconnect as he walked up to the massive four story house complete with four car garage and a literal tower that sprouted from the center of the four wings that made up the bulk of the structure. When he'd first been adopted he'd been dumbfounded by the house, it was so much bigger than anywhere he'd ever been short of a hotel (it had four separate wings for crying out loud); that wasn't what had really amazed him however, no, the truly amazing thing about his house was the special touches his adoptive father had built into it, himself (he was always sure to tell everyone he met that little detail). For example, the dozens of tubes that sprouted from the central tower, each leading to a different wing.

Jack checked his phone and winced at the time- 10:42. The hospital was an hour walk from his house and he'd honestly lost track of time, still, he was only twelve minutes late for curfew and he had a good excuse, hopefully his mom wouldn't be too angry at least about the curfew. As he eased open the front door Jack was relieved to not find his mom standing there waiting for him as he had expected. Walking on his tip-toes for no practical reason, except that's what people did then they were trying to be sneaky, Jack turned toward his room, well his wing really.

"Your mother is waiting for you in the kitchen." Jack jumped half a foot in the air and brought a hand to his chest as a smooth voice sounded from behind him. It had been completely silent and Jack had been quite sure he was alone, so his shock was understandable, and so was his annoyance, as he spun to face the tall dark and more than a little creepy figure of his brother's long term boyfriend, Kozmotiz Pitchiner Black. He was tall, nearly a head taller than Jack, and just as thin, giving him a stretched, slightly skeletal appearance with skin so pale it was practically begging for sunlight, not that Jack could really talk in that department.

"Gah! Pitch!" Jack shouted as he came to a stop.

"Good evening Jack." Pitch spoke calmly, his voice pleasant as a small smile played on his thin lips.

"Have you been standing there waiting for me to get home?" Jack asked, his voice slightly higher than usual, his heart was still

hammering in his chest.

"Despite what you may think Jack, I have far better things to do with my time then sit in the foyer awaiting your return."

"What were you doing here then?"

"I was heading to the office if you must know, I've got court in the morning and there are some last minutes things to be put in place, not that it's your concern." Pitch said as he moved past Jack, grabbing the long black trench coat he wore no matter the weather (who wears a trench coat these days, seriously?). He continued before Jack could respond "Your mother was in quite the state this morning, convincing herself there was something terrible wrong with you. Well, more terrible wrong then usual of course."

"Ha ha" Jack gave a dry fake laugh.

"I offered to speak with a friend and have you committed."

"How generous of you." Jack's voice dripped in sarcasm as he spoke.

"It's my curse." Pitch said as if agreeing with Jack. His hand was on the doorknob when Jack suddenly spoke.

"If you see Aster before me, tell him thanks for his help with mom today."

"While I'm not sure how you expect I would know whether you've seen Aster yet, I'll deliver your message." Pitch turned to leave when he stopped and looked back at Jack "Oh that's right, I have you to thank for you mother foraging through our possessions today. I'll be paying you back for that."

"Oh yeah, sorry bout that." Jack said, then, remembering something from Aster's text he asked "What was in the top drawer anyway?"

"The present you gave Aster for his last birthday."

It took Jack a moment to remember what that was, and then he burst out laughing. He had been 18 at the time of Aster's last birthday and had put his newfound access to certain "adult" shopping venues to full use. Aster had gotten quite a kick out of the gift and the attached note 'for those lonely nights when you've stuck your foot in your mouth yet again.' Pretending to wipe a tear from his eye Jack said "What-what did she say?"

"She informed him that apparently that model is not dish washer safe, a fact you failed to mention when you gifted it." Pitch said as he pulled open the front door.

Jack froze for a moment before giving a little shudder "I did not need to know that."

"Nor did I. Now we can suffer together." Pitch said dryly and was about to step through the open door when another voice sounded from down the hallway opposite the one Jack had been attempting to escape down.

"Oh good yer here, mum was go'n ta send out ta find ya. And where d'ya think yer running off to?" Aster said as he walked into view, his nearly seven foot frame taking up the entirety of the hallway. Messy dark gray-blue (Jack was pretty sure he died it like that, but Aster denied it and he'd been unable to prove it as of yet) hair covered his head, pulled back into a small ponytail in the back, one braided strand falling to the right of his face, a single bead keeping the braid in place. He's skin was tanned, well defined muscles exposed by the tank top and shorts he wore.

"To the office for a bit, I told you ahead-" Pitch said, his voice cut off as Aster strode past Jack and, wrapping one arm around his waist, kissed him.

"Now you can leave." He said with a grin, which was answered with an eye roll and a light cuff on the head from the smaller man.

"So abusive!" Aster exclaimed as Pitch stepped back, almost succeeding in hiding a small smile as he walked out the still open door. "Bye love." Aster called after him.

"Bye dear." The door closed behind Pitch with a light click. Turning to Jack Aster opened his mouth to speak when the door opened back up just wide enough for Pitch to stick his head in and say "Oh yes, Jack wishes to extend his gratitude for your assistance with Anna this morning." With that Pitch withdrew from the doorway and it closed once more.

"So are ya tryin ta get mum ta ground ya for life, or did ya just think it'd be fun ta miss curfew?" Aster asked as he turned down the hallway behind Jack, motioning for him to follow as he did so.

"No, I honestly just lost track of time. Didn't leave till the nurse kicked us out and it's a long walk home." Jack said as he fell into step next to Aster, the hallway just big enough for them to walk side by side.

"Us?"

"Ya, Astrid Hofferson stopped by around noon to visit. Started yelling at him, asking what he was thinking, the usual crap."

"Uh-oh. 'n ya didn't send 'er running after that?"

"Nah, she calmed down after I had a little talk with her. Not that I could have scared her off if I'd tried." Jack said with a chuckle "She's kinda scary herself; I don't think her reputation at school is exaggerated."

"Oh?"

"She plays soccer and baseball on the guy's teams, and went all state in wrestling her sophomore year." Jack said matter-of-factly.

"Sounds like my kinda Shelia." Aster said with a wink.

"Ok first, she's like, 18. Besides, if that display back there was anything to judge by you're still happily out of the dating

market."

"So?"

"So you're _27_, that's like twice her age!"

"It's far from half Jackie, I thought you were supposed to be good at math."

"You know what I mean, and anyway, you've got Pitch, or have you finally come to your senses?"

"I do, and I'm quite happy with _Koz_ thank you." Aster said said, putting an emphasis on the name. Jack's nickname for Kozmotis always irked Aster, which was the main reason Jack had started using it when his brother had first gotten together with him several years ago and it just kinda stuck.

"And I will never understand how." Jack said, suppressing another chuckle.

"Don't be jealous Jackie, you'll find one a yer own soon enough." Jack was about to fire back a retort (his, admittedly rather nonexistent, dating life was _his_ business thank you very much) but he was stopped as they came to the large double doors that led into their kitchens and Aster spoke again. "Well, this's where we part ways Jackie. Good luck, think I'mna get ta a safe blast radius."

"Yaâ€|thanks." Jack said he started at the door, watching Aster turn and continue down the hall out of the corner of his eye. Taking a deep breath grabbed the knob and, suddenly feeling like he was heading to his final judgment, opened the door.

Jack had always felt that, much like most places in this house, the kitchen was unnecessarily large. Why did you need two fridges, a stove with 12 burners, two sinks, and enough cabinets to provide storage for a small country in a house where half the household's presence in the kitchen constituted a fire code violation? Jack himself was hopeless in the kitchen, he could do cereal and pasta and anything who's instructions included the phrase "add two cups water and microwave for 6 minutes" but not much more. His mother wasn't a terrible cook, as least she hadn't poisoned anyone to his knowledge, when she could focus long enough to not burn anything-which was admittedly a rare occurrence. His father could cook quite well when he actually followed a recipe instead of insisting on experimenting with some new ingredient that more often than not shifted the food from 'palatable' to 'nauseating'.

As Jack entered the large space, lights reflecting off the polished marble counter tops and hardwood floors, he spotted his parents; Nickolas and Anna North. His father stood behind the bar counter wearing his usual red button down shirt, his red suit coat was draped over the back of the chair at the head of the specious dinner table that currently separated Jack from his parents. He was nodding as he listened to his wife, who was sitting across the counter with her back to Jack, his well-trimmed black beard streaked with gray bobbing along with his head. As Jack stepped fully into the room he raised a finger to interrupt his wife before jerking his head toward Jack and pointed at him.

"Jack!" His mom exclaimed when she had spun on her barstool to face Jack. She was wearing her favorite green jacket with a dark purple undershirt, her hair pulled up as it always was, streaks of light blue, bright pink, and dark purple permeating the bright green strands, contrasting wonderfully with her dark skin. Her eyes, so dark blue they were nearly purple, glinted as she jumped from her seat, strode around the table and pulled Jack into a rib cracking embrace, all the air in Jack's lungs wooshing out as he hugged her back; Jack felt a pang of guilt as he realized just how worried his mom must have been. Stepping back after several moments her continence changed dramatically, her hands flew to her hips and her gaze became steely as she stared up at Jack, the nearly foot difference in their height doing nothing to lessen the power of her glare. Jack sucked in a breath and held it, waiting for her to speak- this was the part he'd been dreading. Anna was one of the nicest people Jack had ever met, she cared about everyone and always went out of her way to help othersâ€|but god help you if you found yourself on her bad side, Jack had seen her reduce full grown men to tears with one of her infamous tirades.

"How was your day sweetie?" She asked, her voice was calm, but bit held an undertone that left no doubt in Jack's mind that his status as a free man for the next few weeks depended solely on what he said next. Several responses, ranging from funny, to ingratiating, to pleading, ran through his head, in the end he decided on the truth.

"It was good." Jack said cautiously, unable to meet his mother's withering gaze.

"Mhm, that's good. How is Hiccup doing?" She asked, turning from Jack and heading toward the large fridge.

"Good actually, surprisingly good, all things consid- waitâ€|how on _earth_ do you know his _name_?"

"She called hospital to be sure boy was real." His dad called from his place by the counter, his words colored by the thick Russian accent that he still had even after years of speaking English.

"You didn'tâ€|" Jack said incredulously as he looked over at his mom, who's head was conveniently buried in the freezer at that moment. "I'm a really that untrustworthy?" Jack asked, his voice sounding a little hurt.

As that his mom withdrew from the freezer, clutching a frozen drumstick in one hand, and rounded on Jack. Brandishing the ice-cream in a very threatening manner Anna stalked toward Jack. "Oh don't you even try giving me that Mister! You're the one who decided to go to the hospital without even mentioning it to me, or your father, not to mention the fact that you skipped school-again! So I'm sorry if you're offended that I called to confirm your story but I feel I was well within my right as a mother!" With that she stormed past Jack and out the door to the hallway, leaving Jack standing there rather slack jawed, staring at the now closed door.

Jack turned to his dad and was about to say something when Nick put a finger to his lips and winked before speaking, his voice considerably louder than Jack though was strictly necessary given their proximity and the utter lack of background noise. "So Jack, this Hiccup boy,

you say he is doing well?"

"Uh, ya. We had a pretty good time talking, turns out were into a lot of the same stuffâ€|why?" Jack asked, more than a little confused.

Motioning toward the door with his eyebrows Nick continued. "Good, that is good. So, is he cute boy?"

"What? Dad! Why would you even ask th-" Jack started to response, his face going rather red when the door flew open to reveal his mother who strode back into the kitchen, her drumstick now open, several bites missing.

"Oh no! You are not going to do this without me, and don't think I don't know what you're up to!" She said, glaring at Nick who gave an innocent smile. Anna narrowed her eyes once more at Nick before turning to look at Jack with an expectant expression.

"What?" his voice cautious and his expression suspicious.

"Your father asked you a question Jack." She said simply, not taking her eyes off Jack's face.

"Seriously, what is wrong with you? The guy was in the _hospital_, do you really think I'm so desperate that I'm prowling the ICU looking for dates?" Jack loved his parents but sometimes they (and by 'they' he meant his mom) could be absolutely ridiculous. After all, Hiccup had just woken up in the hospital, he was probably surprised that he'd woken up at all, Jack would have to be completely tactless to even entertain any idea like that. Alright, so Hiccup was pretty cute, and they shared a lot of common interests, and his snarky remarks had kept Jack smiling most of the day, and yes that look he got when he really smiled should be illegal, butâ€|where was he going with this again? Oh yea, hospital, that's right... Jack shook his head briefly in an attempt to clear him mind before turning to his parents. "Besides, I don't even know if he'd even be interested."

"And why should he not be? You are fine boy!" Nick said, his voice booming out as it always did.

"Not quite what I meant dad, but thanks." Jack said, hoping he looked less mortified then he felt. Seriously, he could not believe he was having this discussion with his parents about a guy he had just met today, a guy he wasn't even sure himself how he felt about, a guy that, in case anyone had forgotten, was in the freaking hospital!

"Well what is problem the" Nick started to say before Anna leaned over and whispered into his ear "-oh, right." Jack couldn't help but laugh and shake his head slightly. His dad's sometimes almost childlike level innocence and open-mindedness occasionally led to him forgetting things like 'Hiccup might not be gay' and probably wasn't statistically speaking. Coming out to his parents had been one of the easiest experiences of Jack then 15 years, what with Aster having come out as Bi over a decade before and their naturally accepting natures, both Nick and Anna had barley batted the eye, Anna informing him that it didn't excuse him from providing her with grandchildren.

"Could we possibly continue this oh so comfortable conversation later? It's been a pretty exhausting day and I'd like to get some sleep." Jack said, eager to get away now and have some time to work out for himself his thoughts on the brunette boy.

"Alright, we can talk about your punishment instead." Anna said, her voice growing even cheerier than usual as she spoke, an ridiculously smug grin on her face as she looked at Jack from across the room.

"â€¦you know, on second thought I'm good with uncomfortable, let's go back to my love life."

"Oh no, you're far too tired for that! You can get to bed as soon as we've discussed this." Jack sighed as his shoulder slumped, this was going to be bad he could already tell, his mom was far peppy. "Let see, you lied to me, skipped school, ignored phone calls and missed curfew, quite the list Mr. Frost, how do you plead?"

Jack leaned back against the wall he was standing near and covered his face with a hand. "I'm gonna go with, screwed?"

"Oh good, were on the same page then," she said as Jack heard footsteps approaching, her voice growing louder with each impact "I think it's fair to add another month onto your existing punishment."

"Another _month!_" Jack exclaimed, outraged! He'd only been four days away from finally getting his car back and now it was gone for another month! "That's so not fair!" he protested loudly!

"It's not fair for me to sit home half the day worrying about you either Jack." Anna said, her voice calm but stern. Jack deflated at her words, she was right (as always) even if he wasn't happy about it. His voice growing softer and more understanding Anna continued "You should have just asked Jack, I always tell you to come to me or your father if you ever need anything."

"I'm sorry mom." Jack said, pouring as much contrition and dejection into his voice as he could muster, his attempt at being pitiable having no effect his mother save making her smile a little bigger. He really did feel bad for making her worry, so he took his punishment without (much) complaint. Thinking about what she had said Jack decided he didn't have anything to lose and said "Soâ€¦could I get your permission to go to the hospital tomorrow?"

"After school?"

"Uhâ€¦I was hoping in the morning." Jack said and, seeing the slight frown that appeared on his mom's face, pressed on quickly. "I know I've already missed a day butâ€¦I think it would help him to have someone there to talk to, instead of just sitting there thinking all day." Jack held his breath as he watched Anna mull it over, her expression thoughtful, before heaving an overdramatic sigh.

"Oh the things I let you get away with. Alright, you can go tomorrow, I'll get Aster to drive you." She said, then added with a wink "See, I can be reasonable."

"Thanks mom." Jack said as he stepped forward and hugged her.

"You're welcome sweetie, now, go brush your teeth and get to bed."

"Alright," Jack said as he stepped back and opened the door "Night mom, night dad."

"Night dear."

"Goodnight Jack."

Jack was just about to close the door when his mom's voice called from behind him "So he was cute then?"

"Yes!" Jack said sharply, slamming the door behind him the second the word left his lips and heading toward his bedroom. He had the sneaking suspicions that sleep wouldn't be as easy to come by as he hoped.

Hiccup rubbed the sleep from his eyes, a task made more difficult by his lack of a usable right arm, and let out a long slow breath. He was exhausted, every action took more effort than it should have and it was an effort to open his eyelids after each blink. He wanted to sleep some more, but Hiccup had never been able to do that, once he was awake he was awake for the day. Last night had been, as he had predicted, bad. Without the distraction of company his thoughts inevitably drifted down the same paths they'd tread for the last few months and Hiccup found himself thinking about the nurse's response time at three in the morning. Considering he was on suicide watch, he imagined it would be pretty quick, unfortunately. So he had lain on his bed, staring blankly out the window and alternating between counting the pairs of headlights that passed by, lightening up the very neutral poke-a-dot pattern on the curtain and wondering just how sturdy the curtain rod was.

He had finally fallen asleep sometime around four am, slipping into a fitful sleep filled with the same dreams that had tormented him every nights since the accident. He'd been woken by a gentle shake on his arm and opened his bleary eyes to see a concerned nurse looked down at him, asking if he was alright; apparently he'd been shouting pretty loud...not that was anything new. He'd assured her he was fine and watched her leave, glancing back at him worriedly as she went. That's when his eyes had fallen on the clock on the bottom of the TV, the small red electronic display read 7:23, which would explain the light pouring into the room through the thin curtain, and his utter exhaustion. He had lain back down, hoping for a few more hours of sleep but to no avail, his conscious mind was had returned to tormenting him, taking the rains back from his subconscious with gusto after its respite. His father had shown up just before eight to check on him, they talked briefly before he had to leave for work, leaving Hiccup once again with only his thoughts for company.

Not long after his father left there was another knock on the door. Assuming it was a nurse Hiccup said "Come in." Not bothering to remove the pillow from where he had placed it over his face in an ultimately futile attempt to get a little more sleep.

He was quite surprised then when the door clicked open and a newly

familiar voice said "I'm I interrupting something?" With a small start Hiccup gingerly pushed himself up in bed and pulled the pillow off his face to reveal Jack standing there, in what looked like the exact same clothes he'd been wearing yesterday, a huge bag of fast food in one hand and a drink tray in the other, his near permanent smile even bigger than usual as he held up the food "I thought you'd like some actual food." Hiccup just sat there, feeling surprised, amused, and surprisingly glad, he hadn't realized until right then just how much he had been hoping Jack would come visit again sometime. He stifled a chuckle as Jack placed the enormous bag on the table and started digging through it. "I didn't really know what you liked so I just kinda ran the gambit," he said, pulling out several wrapped sandwiches, a couple longer packages that were probably breakfast burritos, two Styrofoam domes and a fruit cup. "So what'll it be?"

"What is there exactly?"

"Sausage egg and cheese, bacon egg and cheese, spicy burrito, not as spicy burrito, extra spicy burrito, burrito with what they say is steak but I wouldn't trust it, hotcakes, hotcakes with bacon and eggs, and fruit." Jack said, pointing to the little bundles one by one.

"Hmm, how boutâ€|the one with the bacon and the not-steak-steak burrito?"

"Really? You know it's not steak right?" Jack looked back at Hiccup as he gathered his choices from the tabletop.

"Yes I believe you mentioned that, but I feel bad for it now." Hiccup fixed Jack with an accusatory stare.

"Ah, well we wouldn't want to hurt our foods feelings would we?" Jack voice was sarcastic as he handed Hiccup the food.

"Remember that in an hour when the flapjack you piss off gives you heartburn." Hiccup ripped the little piece of tape keeping the paper in place and opened his sandwich, he didn't eat fast-food often, preferring to cook for himself and rarely having the money anyway, but this smelled wonderful and he bit off a third of it in one bite. "Mmmmm" he said as he chewed the large bite, the sandwich flooding his mouth with that taste that only fast-food and cooking grease could manage, the one where you knew for a fact your arteries were clogging as you chewed and you couldn't care less.

Jack laughed as he went back to the table "How 'bout to drink? I got orange juice, coffee, decaf and black, milk, one of those smoothie things from TV?"

Hiccup chewed several more times and swallowed before responding "Orange juice sounds really good." Most times Hiccup's options for drinking were skim milk, water or occasionally soda so juice was a bit of a treat. "What about you?" Hiccup asked as Jack handed him the plastic cup, as soon as he had a grip on it he took a big gulp and smiled at the taste.

"Think I'll give this thing a try," jack said, gesturing the orange and red swirled drink that Hiccup remembered seeing on TV "see if it's as good as they say." Hiccup watched as Jack took a sip,

contemplated it for a moment and then made a face and stuck his tongue out.

"No good?"

"No, taste like someone make guacamole out of a rotten lemon." Hiccup couldn't help but laugh at the description "Let me try." He said, holding a hand out for the drink which Jack gave him.

"You've been warned."

Hiccup took a sip, it tasted kind of like strawberry but with a mango flavor mixed in. "Oh it's not that bad." Hiccup said, shooting Jack a look that clearly said 'pansy' Jack just grinned and continued to look smug. That when the aftertaste hit "Ugh, I thought this was supposed to be Mango?"

"That is was they said." Jack confirmed.

"They why does it taste like warm bleach?"

"Excellent question."

"Hand me the coffee, I need to get this taste out of my mouth." Hiccup said, trying wipe the taste off on his blanket.

"Which one?"

"I'm fine with either, give me whatever one you don't want."

Grabbing a coffee and bringing it to Hiccup, Jack said "Oh, I don't drink coffee." That surprised Hiccup slightly, he had kind of assumed Jack's energy and peppy nature was at least in some way caffeine fueled, but apparently it was all natural.

"Really?" Hiccup asked as he took a cleansing gulp of the coffee, the flavor overpowering the terrible aftertaste. "So you're saying you're naturally allâ€|" Hiccup finished his sentence by gesturing in Jack's general direction.

"All what?"

"Allâ€|that!" Hiccup said, gesturing as Jack again.

"You just gestured to all of me." Jack said, slightly bemused.

"Exactly." Hiccup said with a grin, raising his eyebrows in a challenge. Jack shook his head with a laugh and took a seat in his usual chair. They talked about random things, continued discussions on their favorite TV shows and movies, talked about the latest comic book Jack had read and lamented the lack of anything good on daytime TV.

Their conversation was interrupted by the appearance of Astrid a little after noon, which honestly surprised Hiccup. "Well look at Mrs. Straight A's missing two half days in a row, someone open the curtains I need to check for flying pigs."

"Ha ha," she said dryly as she took a seat cross legged on the table, moving the half full bag of food onto the floor while giving Hiccup a questioning look to which the brunette just shook his head and rolled his eyes in Jack's direction. "I've only got two free periods and gym after lunch. I challenged the teacher to shoot a three pointer before I did or I got the week off." She said simply.

"And you won. Why am I not surprised in the least?" Hiccup said.

"Because I'm a goddess of all things sports." Astrid said, rolling her shoulders and stretching her arms out lazily.

"Ah, that's right, how could I forget." They spoke for a bit longer before Hiccup's stomach rumbled, Jack's following suite a moment later and Jack offered to go get food again. Hiccup tried to protest, saying he'd already brought breakfast but Jack insisted, already out of the room before Hiccup could really mount much of an argument.

When they were alone Astrid said "So he's back again today?"

"Obviously." Hiccup snapped then stopped, why had that come out so defensive?

"Whoa there, just making an observation." Astrid said with a smirk that Hiccup didn't think he liked one bit. They just sat there in a rather uncomfortable silence, Astrid watching Hiccup and Hiccup looking anywhere but the blond girl until she broke the silence. "He's cute." It was a statement, simple and clear, yet in hung in the air like a storm cloud. Of course Astrid know that Hiccup wasâ€¦like that, she was the only living person who knew actually, Hiccup having gone to her for advice and understanding many times while he was working through it for himself. He'd been scared to death to tell her, but when he finally had she'd giggle a little, told him she wasn't surprised and assured him it was no big thing, and she'd been true to her word. In fact sometimes Hiccup wished he was as comfortable talking about it as she was, it would certainly make some things easier.

"Obviously he takes care of himself." Hiccup said forcing his voice into a neutral tone, he could only imagine how red his cheeks were getting, if the heat seeping into them was anything to judge by.

"Oh, _obviously._" She said, he tone more than a little patronizing. Hiccup glared at her. "So when are you gonna ask him out?"

"Ah, pft, eh, what makes you think I'm going to ask him out at all?!" Hiccup sputtered.

"Oh come _on_ Hiccup, it's pretty obvious you're into him." Astrid said offhandedly, looking down to examine her fingernails.

"I am not!" Hiccup was indignant, slashing the air with his good arm.

"Oh? Then why are you always laughing at his stupid antics?"

"I'm not laughing at his antics, I'm laughing at him."

"You've known him two days and you talk like you've known each other for ever."

"So he'd easy to talk to? That doesn't mean anything."

"Hiccup, it's you. We sat at the same table in preschool for two weeks before you would even tell me your name."

"I was shy back then."

"You're shy now."

"I'm introverted, there's a difference."

"You don't like people." Astrid's voice increased slightly in volume, she was getting tired of Hiccup's stubborn denial.

"I like you, and your kind of people." Hiccup said, his voice rising to match Astrid's.

"And we've been friends for nearly fourteen years." Astrid said, ignoring his jab, her voice had made it well beyond an appropriate "inside voice" at this point but she didn't seem to care.

"He saved my life!" Hiccup shouted in response, then started and blinked several times, what he'd said actually registering with him suddenly. Jack had saved his life, when he certainly did not want to be saved; he should have been angry with Jack at the least, he easily could have hated him for it, he'd been fully prepared to in fact—so why didn't he? Why had he spent all of yesterday comfortably in Jack's company? Why had he been so glad to see him this morning when he'd shown up? How was it he could suddenly go half a day with not a single tormenting thought when he'd been unable to go an hour for months? And why had he reacted so strongly to Astrid's observation? "I hate you." Hiccup said as he shot a glare at Astrid who just grinned and leaned back against the wall. Any further remarks were halted by Jack's reappearance, his white head coming appearing as he backed into the room with two pizza boxes and a litter of soda.

"Alright, there's plain cheese and pepperoni, who wants what?" He asked as he set the boxes on the table next to Astrid who hopped down to make room for both boxes.

"How did you—?" Hiccup said, gesturing at the boxes in confusion even as a smile pulled at the corners of his lips.

"Called in an order this morning." Jack said with a grin as he opened the box and handed a slice to Astrid. "You didn't think I was going to eat here again, did you?" Jack made a face as he pick up a slice for himself "Which you want Hiccup?"

"I'll take the cheese." Hiccup said with a grin. His favorite kind of pizza was Hawaiian, but since that wasn't an option he went for the cheese. "Thanks Jack, but y—" Hiccup started to offer a thank you but froze as he looked down at the slice Jack had handed him; the triangle was covered with pineapple, ham, and little bits of bacon. He looked up at Jack, who was grinning like a child that had just

been told Christmas was coming early, and couldn't do anything but grin in return.

"You did say Hawaiian yesterday, right?"

Hiccup nodded "That I did, that I did."

"Good, wouldn't want to have wasted a perfectly good Pizza by contaminating it like that."

"Don't be hate'n on my pizza." Hiccup said as he took a huge bite and chewed the first bite slowly, the sweet flavor of the pineapple juice mixing with the salty of the sauce was delicious. His eyes happened to meet Astrid's at the moment, the blond teen having relocated to a seat near Jack's usual spot, and she raised her eyebrows pointedly.

Astrid just smiled when Hiccup shot her a glare, waiting till Jack turned away to flop down a seat over from her, there wasn't much she was scared of and Hiccup didn't make that list. She had known Hiccup since they were four years old, and she knew when her best friend was caught up on something, be it a drawing he was agonizing over, an issue with his father, or, in this case, a white haired teen with inhumanly white teeth. At least she usually did, she was still beating herself up over having been so blind two days ago, but she had been so relieved to see her friend smile again she hadn't noticed just how forced that smile was. Looking back now it was painfully obvious, some friend she wasâ€¦ Still, Astrid did know Hiccup better than he preferred to admit, and she knew that he was just shy and stubborn enough to completely ignore this whole thing with Jack, despite his obvious interest, well, obvious to her anyway. Anyone else probably wouldn't notice the constant smirk that Hiccup wore when talking with Jack, the way his eyes never left the pale teen's face, or the fact that the conversation was taking place at all; Hiccup was not an easy person to get close to, he preferred his own company most of the time, and yet there was Jack, having somehow cut through Hiccup's shell like a scalpel.

Astrid spent the rest of the day just watching the interactions between the two boys, taking careful note of the little looks they leveled at one another and the jibes that were basically one step away from open flirting. She also noticed the slightly more forced expressions, saw how Hiccup's face would fall into introspection while Jack went on obliviously, she could probably guess what he was thinking about. Every passing minute made her more and more certain that she had to do something, what though she wasn't quite sure. It wasn't until a nurse came in to inform them that visiting hours were over in ten minutes that an idea started to form in her mind.

"Feel better Hiccup," she said as she gave him a brief hug "Schools boring without you to talk to."

"Yeah, feel better man. If you're stuck here much longer you may die from food poisoning." Astrid could see the corners of Hiccup's mouth raise in a smile as Jack leaned down and gave him a quick hug as well.

"So will I be seeing you tomorrow?" Hiccup asked looking directly at Jack before glancing over and Astrid for a heartbeat and then back at Jack.

"Well I'll be here around lunch again, that bet was for the whole week so I've nothing else to do." Astrid said with a grin.

"I doubt I'll be able to convince my mom to let me skip another day, so I probably won't be able to until after school lets out." Astrid was behind Jack, so she couldn't see his face, but she did see his shoulder's fall as he spoke. Hiccup's face fell into a frown for a split second before pulling up in what Astrid knew to be a fake smile.

"You mean you're actually going to school? And here I thought you were a lost cause." Hiccup said with a bit of his usual snark.

"You wound me Hiccup." Jack said, striking a dramatic pose before laughing and heading to where Astrid was standing, next to the open door and rather impatient looking nurse. They waved to Hiccup once more before the door was closed and he was lost to their sight. Astrid was surprised when Jack leaned over to the nurse and said "Keep a close eye on him, alright? He seemed kinda out of it today, seemed to be thinking about something." Huh, apparently Jack had noticed more then she'd given him credit for.

"Of course, I'll let the night nurse know. Its good he's got friends like you two, company can help a lot with these things." Jack and Astrid left the nurse and headed toward the entrance where their respective parents would be picking them up soon.

"That was nice of you." Astrid said as they walked down the quiet hallway.

"Uh, thanksâ€¦|what exactly did I do?"

"What you said to the nurse. I worry about him a lot, nice to see I'm not alone."

"Oh, well I get it, so, ya knowâ€¦|"

"Yeah. I do what I can but I wish I could be around for him more often." She said. Putting both hands behind her head Astrid made her voice as casual as she could and, keeping her face pointed right in front of her said, "I swear, I have got to find that boy a boyfriend, maybe then I won't have to worry so much, or maybe I'll worry more, who knows, guess it would depend on who he finds." Astrid had to suppress a grin as, out of the corner of her eye, she saw Jack's head snap toward her so fast at the word 'boyfriend' she wondered how he didn't get whiplash.

"Uhhâ€¦|hmm." Jack muttered, not know what to say. Astrid had just said 'get that boy a boyfriend' which meant that Hiccup was both single, and, if Jack was interpreting the blonds words correctly (not that that was a difficult task) might actually be interested in him. Luckily for Jack he was saved from having to find something to say by the timely arrival of Aster driving his old Jeep. "Uh, bye Astrid." He said, waving as he walked around and climbed into the passenger seat. He gave Aster a quick hello as he strapped in before falling completely into his own thoughts. Had he been more observant, he may have noticed the blond figure in the rearview mirror punch its fist into the air and do a little spin before settling into its usual, calmer demeanor.

Damn Astrid. Damn her pushy, nosey, doesn't know how to mind her own business self. Why couldn't she have just minded her own business instead of coming in and shattering Hiccup's wonderful denial? He could have, and would have quite happily, remained oblivious to growing crush he was developing on his unexpected new friend, in fact it would have made things a hell of a lot simpler. For starters, he certainly would not have spent the last few hours catching himself staring at Jack whenever the opportunity presented itself. Noticing the way his eyes crinkled at the corners when he smiled, grinning at the happiness that infused his entire face when he laughed, tracing the curves of his lips as he talked, wondering if those lips were as smooth as they lookedâ€¦shit. Hiccup buried his face in his left hand with a sigh; he had, somehow, by some miracle, without even meaning to, made a friend that didn't find him weird or boring and he had to go screw it up by falling for him. "Jack probably doesn't even swing that way. He certainly doesn't radiate that aura, then again neither do I really, but that's beside the point. The point is that I'm not going to find out because I'm not asking him out, Astrid be damned." Hiccup let out a self-deprecating chuckle "I can just imagine that conversation now 'Oh hi Jack, for some reason you seem to want to be friends with me and I think you're a pretty cool person whose company I enjoy, wanna go out? Ya no, it's ok you can laugh, ya I can't imagine why anyone would want to go out with me either. Ya no worries I didn't really expect to see you again anyway its cool, bye.'" Jack's cool and I'm not going to ruin this friendship, can you call it a friendship after two days? Can you be friends with someone after two days? Well apparently you can be crushing on them so why not? Ugh! I'm not going to ruin this friendship over some stupid crush!" Hiccup ran his left hand over his face as he growled before meeting its reflection's gaze in the now dark window before him. "and now I'm talking to myselfâ€¦wonderful, as if my sanity wasn't already questionable enough."

Hiccup spent the rest of the night, save for one mercifully short visit from his father, thinking along much the same vein, trying to convince himself that he could just forget about this ridiculous crush and just move on. The night was far from restful, Hiccup's racing mind took hours to finally calm down enough to fall asleep and even when it finally did his dreams were filled with a particular while haired youth. Looking back however, Hiccup would later realize that, while his thoughts were indeed far from peaceful that night, they did not once stray down the darker paths they had favored these past months. That right there would have told him all he needed to know. *****

Jack awoke that morning to the first few strains of "Schools Out" as his mp3 player glowed to life, an irony Jack would have appreciated if he hadn't been too busy rubbing the sleep from his eyes, informing him it was time to wake for the day. As Jack had predicted, his mom had said that two days was plenty enough school to be missing and even his most impassioned arguments had failed to convince her otherwise. So, dragging his feet every step of the way, Jack trudged through his morning routine, reluctantly preparing for another tedious day of school. He took a quick shower, spending a few wonderful moments fantasizing about falling back asleep under the warm water, threw on his favorite hoodie and a pair of Khaki pants and grabbed his backpack.

With one last forlorn look around his bedroom Jack walked over to the circular opening set into his far wall and, doing his best to suppress the feeling that today was going to be a terrible day, threw himself into the tube. Several sharp turns and one stomach lurching drop that never failed to put a little grin on his face later, Jack popped out in the hallway just outside the kitchen, the slide letting him out at waist level. Stifling a yawn Jack opened the kitchen door and was immediately assailed with the smell of bacon, potatoes, eggs, cheese, and orange juice.

A grin spreading across his face Jack took a seat at the bar next to his mom. "Morning." He said to the room at large.

"How'd you sleep sweetie?" Anna asked as she scrolled through something on her phone.

"Fine." Jack lied, not feeling like explaining that he'd spent the better portion of the night debating whether or not he was going to pursue his growing crush on a certain befreckled hospital patient.

"Well, your hair looks like it lost a fight with a blender, and your roots are starting to show." Said Pitch, who was bustling around the kitchen, dolling out the contents of various pans onto a plate which he set in front of Jack before moving on to prepare another plate.

"What!?" Jack all but shouted grabbing a spoon and examining his distorted reflection, pulling back his hair to expose the still white roots, his natural brunette hair not yet peeking through. There was a low chuckle from the direction of the stove. "Why do you have to be such a dick?"

"I'm only a dick to people who deserve it." He said as he glided around the counter a set a plate in front of Nick who gave a hearty exclamation in Russian before pouncing on his food.

"Yer always a dick ta me." Aster interjected from where he was standing by the sink, steadily cleaning the dirty pans generated by breakfasts.

"Put it together love." Pitch replied in a patronizing tone, causing Jack to let out a loud laugh which turned into an over exaggerated gagging noise as he watched Pitch glide over and giving Aster a quick peck on the cheek, which of course his brother turned into a full blown battle of the tongues right there in the middle of the kitchen, at least until Pitch pulled back and cuffed him on the side of the head.

"Settle down boys, we eat here." Anna said, not looking up from her phone. Breakfast went uneventfully for the most part, everybody devouring their food with gusto. Pitch and Aster were the only two in the house that could actually cook, and while Jack would never admit it to his face he had to admit that Pitch was an amazing cook. As Jack finished the last bite of the perfectly fluffy eggs, the bacon having lasted an impressive six seconds on his plate, Jack (grudgingly) thanked Pitch for the food and shouldered his book bag. "Have a good day as _school_ sweetie." Anna said, giving Jack a slightly too warm smile. The inflection she put on the word 'school' clearly said 'because that's where you'll be going if you want to

live through the day.'

"Have good day Jack!" Nick called through a mouthful of eggs before swallowing and adding "Be careful."

The atmosphere in the kitchen changed like a light bulb blowing, the pleasant feeling pervading the room changed to a charged kind of surprise and apprehension as every eye locked itself on Nick. The large man continued eating, blissfully unaware of just how fragile the air in the room had just become. Jack felt his heart sink, the slight feeling that today was going to be a bad day solidifying into full on apprehension at Nick's words. His adoptive father was not the type of person to tell someone to 'be careful,' having a philosophy much more akin to 'if you live through it, it is victory!' that by itself wouldn't be cause for alarm except Nick had a sixth sense for when something bad was going to happen. The last time he'd told someone to be careful Jack had nearly broken both his legs on a snowboarding trip; the time before that was to Aster before a mountain climbing expedition a few years ago, the next time Jack had seen his brother he'd been in a hospital bed breathing through a tube. With so many hits and no misses they could recall, the family had learned to take these incidents seriously.

Anna's tone was a forced calm when she spoke "Aster, why don't you drive Jack to school today? It's getting a bit nippy out."

"Sure thing mum, r'you ready ta go frostbite?" Aster said, understanding immediately.

"I suppose." Jack said, with a shaky laugh, throwing a glance at Nick before walked heading out to the garage and taking a seat in Aster's Jeep.

Aster arrived a minute later and hopped into the car, hitting the garage door opener on his way and turned the key in the ignition. He looked over at Jack with concern "Do be careful alright mate? Don't go doin anythin reckless er anythin."

"Me? Reckless? It's like you don't even know me."

"I know ya plenty well, thas why 'm worried."

Despite the feeling a doom that Jack could now feel following him like he'd been marked for death, he made it to school just fine, thanked Aster for the ride and made his way into the building.

Jack's first class passed uneventfully, unless you count his teacher 'welcoming him back' in front of the entire class. Now he was on his way to study hall which his teacher, bless her heart, had decided to hold in the courtyard in order to take advantage of the rapidly fading summer. Jack surveyed the courtyard when he arrived, a mostly paved area dotted with tables and a few tree here and there. He was about to take a seat in a secluded corner and start on the math homework that he'd been given to catch up on, as much as he didn't want to, when he heard someone call from across the courtyard.

"Hey Frost!" Looking to see who the owner of the voice was he saw Snotlout Jorgenson waving him over from the middle of the group of

people, mostly kids from the football team, that always seemed to surround him. Jack had been on the team as a kicker for half his freshmen year before his disdain for spending all his nights in practice ended that little adventure, yet 'Snot' still seemed to think they were friends. Thinking it best not to start any issued Jack shuffled over to the burly teen.

"Whats up?"

"Is it true?"

"Is what true?"

"You know, that you found Haddock trying to off himself on Monday?" Jack stiffened immediately at the other teen's words. Theâ€|_amused_ look on Snot's face made Jack grit his teeth, he hands clenching into fists. He was about to answer when Snot continued "I know you were just doing the right thing, but I mean, it was _Haddock._ Woulda been doing the world a service if you'd just left him." Snot laughed, the boys surrounding him echoing his amusement a moment later, his face falling slightly as he saw Jack apparently hadn't appreciated hi joke.

It took all Jack's self-control to keep his voice quite as he spoke through clenched teeth "Shut up."

"What's eating you? It Haddock, he's a loser, his closest friends are the teachers, he's embarrassing in Phy Ed, he useless! If my life sucked that bad I'd wanna end it to." More chuckles from the peanut gallery. Jack was having a hard time keeping himself from shaking, his fingernails digging into his palm.

"What the fuck is wrong with you? How can you be so callous you ass hole!"

Snot let out a mocking laugh "What do you care Frost, you making him another _charity case_ huh?"

"Fuck off Snot." Jack spat before turning on his heel. He was about to start walking when he heard from behind him.

"Whatever, I know if_ I'd_ found him I would'a left him. Hell, I would'a helped him along." Another barking laugh accompanied the statement. That was in, that was the last straw, that was one step to far.

Jack turned and stepped close to Snotlout. "I'm warning you Snot." He said, his voice cold.

"Ooooh, what are _you_ going to do _Frost_" Snot said, his voice full of derision. To accentuate his point he brought his hangs up and shoved Jack hard, forcing the smaller teen back.

Aster had taught Jack how to fight when he was fifteen and those lessons had been put to good use on a couple of occasions when people thought it would be fun to mess with him over the gay thing. Balling his fist like Aster had taught him Jack closed the distance between himself and Snotlout in one step and swung, his fist connecting solidly with the large teen's face, snapping his head to the side and causing him stumble, overbalance, and fall flat on the ground.

The silence in the courtyard was obsolete, the low murmur of conversation having died completely as every student turned to stare at Jack, standing over Snotlout, breathing heavily, his hands still balled into fists.

His teacher's voice cut through the silence like a knife "Mr. Frost, Mr. Jorgenson, principal's office, _now_."

Anna North was busying herself with the various affairs of "ToohieAnna's Fairies" the charity she had started a few years ago that provided free dental care to people who couldn't otherwise afford it. She hadn't picked them name, her staff had and despite her abjections it stuck. What had started as a single clinic just a few years ago had now spread across the entire country, and she was at that very moment reviewing plans for expansion into other countries. Needless to say, at that moment she was a very busy woman; yet all the emails to respond to, plans to ok, permits to get cleared and licenses applications to follow up on did nothing to distract her from the worry that had nagged at the back of her mind since breakfast. Anna knew both her children were big boys now, capable or taking care of themselves, well past the age where she had to watch over them like a mother hen—but damnit she still worried and that was her right and duty as a mother! She knew Jack wouldn't lie to her about anything important; the GPS in his phone was just for her peace of mind, she trusted Jack to behave himself and keep out of trouble, the breathalyzer in his dashboard was just there for verification.

Taking a deep breath Anna attempted to refocus herself on her work, finally giving that up when she realized she had just read the same sentence four times without understanding a word of it, she just couldn't stop worrying about Jack. It had been a rather unexpected thing, Jack coming into their lives four years ago. She and her husband had adopted Aster when he was eleven and hadn't intended on adding any more to their little family, but when Anna had heard about Jack through a friend she just couldn't get his story out of her head. In the end they'd gone to meet Jack and put through the adoption request the next day, and that was that. Anna had expected Jack would be a different case than Aster, would take more work and watching (if that were even possible) and she hadn't been wrong. Maybe it was his history that mad her worry about Jack so much then she ever had her elder child.

Anna was shaken from her introspection by the buzzing of her phone on the table. As she grabbed is her heart lurched even as her shoulder's relaxed, it was Jack's school, not a hospital or the police, just Jack's school. "Hello?" She answered, he voice slightly higher than usual.

"Hello Anna, its Tim." Yes, she was on a first name basis with the principal, so what?

"Ah, hello Tim. Wish I could say it was good to hear from you again."

Time laughed, "Yes, been almost a month hasn't it?"

"Twenty six days," Anna said, a slight laugh in her own voice now. Tim wouldn't have been this calm if Jack was hurt "I was beginning to

hope I'd heard the last of you."

"You and me both." Tim's voice became more serious as he spoke "Jack was involved in an altercation with another student today during second hour."

Anna groaned as she spoke "Is he hurt?"

"No, nothing like that, both of them are fine though Mr. Jorgenson is sporting quite the black eye."

"I'm so sorry, do you need me to come get him?"

"Well, I've already suspended both boys for the remainder of the week but, Anna, Mr. Jorgenson intends on pressing charges."

Anna's face hardened at that, she would admit that she might have been a teeny bit biased, but she also knew her son and he wasn't one to start a fight, though he certainly would finish them. It sounded to her like someone was trying to pick on her baby, and nobody got through that unscathed. "Thanks for the heads up Tim, I'll send someone down to pick up Jack right away."

"Thank you Anna, have a good day."

"You too Tim."

Anna had barely hung up the phone before she was dialing Aster's number, holding the phone to her ear as it rang 6 times before going to voicemail, she called back and was sent to voicemail after three rings. She frowned and tapped out _call me _NOW_ or I'm coming down there_, then sat back and counted. She got to fourteen before her phone rang.

"Hello dear." She answered cheerily.

"Hey mum, what c'n Iâ€|do fer ya?" Aster was rather breathless as he spoke.

"Put Koz on please." Anna waited while the phone was handed over.

"Anna. What can _I_ do for you?" Koz's voice was calm and even as always.

"I need you to get dressed and head over to Jack's school, I've got a case for you."

"Oh?" Anna explained the situation, as well as her suspicions, quickly. "Sounds interesting, I'll leave right away."

"Thank you." Anna said, suppressing a giggle at the annoyed exclamation from Aster she could just hear through the phone. She hung up and took a deep breath, calming her slightly frayed nerves. With crisis averted, and her best attack dog set on whoever it was going after her family, Anna North settled down to get some work done, after all, she was a very busy woman.

Jack sat stiffly in his chair, his gaze darting between Snotlout who sat across from Jack glaring at Jack through his eye that wasn't

swollen shut, the school police officer who was sitting between the two teens, and Snotlout's father, an intimidatingly large man with thinning black hair and an impressive belly he'd squeezed into a sharp gray suit.

"Is it really necessary to wait like this? I've already made it perfectly clear that my son intends to press charges." Mr. Jorgenson addressed the officer, his tone irritated.

The officer responded, his own tone echoing Mr. Jorgenson's irritation "You have, and, though I didn't actually arrest him, Mr. Frost here has invoked his right to legal counsel, and since his legal council is on his way here anyway I figure it would be easiest to wait and save us all a trip to the station if possible. Several more minutes passed in uncomfortable silence before the door flew open and Pitch, dressed in a black suit and sporting his smuggest grin, the one he reserved for when he had just won a case or insulted Jack.

"My apologies for the delay," he said as he approached the table and took a seat next to Jack, digging through his briefcase as he sat down "but I had to pick these up on the way here." As he spoke he tossed a stack of papers onto the middle of the table.

"Not a problem Mrâ€|?" The officer said, looking at Pitch.

"Kozmotis Black." Pitch said, extending his hand to the officer who shook it briefly.

"What are these?" Mr. Jorgenson asked, holding one of the sheets at arm's length as he read it.

"Signed witness statements from seven students, all swearing that Mr. Jorgenson was the aggressor in their altercation, and Mr. Frost's actions were solely in self-defense."

"Why that's ridiculous! You can't just come in here-" Mr. Jorgenson began to sputter but Pitch overrode him.

"With that in mind, I am informing you that we fully intend to press charges of our own against young Mr. Jorgenson here." Pitch said, gesturing at Snotlout "Unless, we can all agree that the matter of a petty schoolyard squabble is far beneath our time and just forget all about it?" The smile Pitch leveled at the large man in front of him was so smug Jack couldn't suppress a small grin at the sight.

Jack had to suppress a full blown laugh as he watched a vein in Mr. Jorgenson's neck pulse in time with one in his forehead, he could practically _see_ the large man's blood pressure rising. After several moments Mr. Jorgenson took a deep breath and forced one of the best shit-eating-grins Jack had ever seen onto his face "Well, seeing as no permanent harm was done I don't see any real need to blow this out or peroration. My apologies for the inconvenience." He said to both Pitch and the officer before standing and striding from the room with Snotlout at his heels.

"Thank you for your time officer." Pitch said as he gathered up the papers from the table "I will be taking Jack home now, unless there's anything else?"

"No, that would be it. You have a good day," he said with a small smile before directing his words at Jack "and stay out of fights, understood?"

"Yes sir." Jack said, nodding his agreement.

The walk through the school was a bit uncomfortable what with half the kids they past staring at Jack, 4th hour had just let out so the halls were packed with people gawking at the kid who had punched out Snotlout Jorgenson. When they finally exited the building and Jack couldn't feel any more eyes glued to him he turned to Pitch. "How did you get those statements so fast?"

"I merely asked for them, your classmates were surprisingly eager to throw Mr. Jorgenson under the bus. I take it he's none to popular?"

"By his own fault, jackass thinks he's better then everyone." Jack still felt his temper flare up when he thought about Snotlout's comments.

"Apple doesn't fall far from the tree then," Pitch said as he lead Jack to car where Aster was waiting.

"Mum want's ya t' call her, now." He said as Jack climbed into the back seat and strapped himself in.

Jack gave a sigh as he pulled his phone from his pocket and dialed him mom's number, she answered on the first ring.

"Explain. Now." Was all she said when she picked up. As calmly as he could Jack explained what had happened to his mother, not glossing over any details in his description.

As soon as he finished Anna spoke "Well, while I still don't think you should ever have to resort to violence, I'm proud of you Jack." Jack certainly hadn't expected that response; he'd expected at least a chewing out and at worst a grounding to end all groundings. "I'm on the other line with a woman from customs, we can talk more when you get home if you'd like." His mother said after a moment. Jack didn't much like the idea of going home, his was still agitated from the day's experience and he didn't think much of going home and sitting in his room. There was really only one place he wanted to go at that moment, and, seeing as how he wasn't grounded Jack decided to push his luck.

"Uh, mom?"

"Yes dear?"

"Do you think I could head to the hospital for a while?" There was a long pause, during which Jack was sure his mother was thinking of a way to say no.

"I don't see a problem with that, as long as you're back by curfew."

"Really? Thanks!" Surprise mad Jack's voice louder than he had intended and he heard Anna laughing.

"You're welcome, have a good time."

As Jack hung up the phone Aster spoke up "I think ya let the bastard off easy. 'E woulda walked away with a lot more 'an a black eye if 'ed said that shit in fronta me."

"Yes, and then I would have had to explain to a court why you attacked an eighteen year old." Pitch said without shifting his gaze from the window where he'd been staring the entire ride.

"Ah, psh." Aster dismissed with a chuckle "Either way I'm proud a ya Frostbite, standin' up fer someone like that."

"Funny enough that exactly what mom said."

"Really? So then 'm I take'n ya to the hospital?"

Jack grinned "If you wouldn't mind." The drive to the hospital was a quick one, Jack finding his anger slowly being replaced by excitement at the idea of seeing Hiccup again, and apprehension at the idea of being in the same room as Hiccup, give his growing feelings for his new friend.

Astrid: _Hey Hiccup, how r u feeling?_

You: _Tired, stressed, conflicted, anxious, and a little hungry_

Astrid: _Well that kinds sucksâ€¦!_

You: _I blame you for 4/5 of those_

Astrid: _How is it my fault your hungry!?!_

You: _That the one that I don't blame on you, though I'm sure if I think hard enough I'll find a way._

Astrid: _Har har. How is the rest my fault?_

You: _You had to bring up Jack yesterday, didn't you? Just couldn't leave well enough alone!_

Astrid: _So sorry I pointed out the PAINFUULLY OBVIOUS! I'm pretty sure your DAD could have figured it out!_

You: _Not Funny. _

Astrid: _So, you were up all night thinking about him?_

You: _NO!_

Astrid: _Did you dream about him?_

You: _HELL NO!_

Astrid: _I knew it!_

You: _I SAID NO!_

Astrid: _But you meant YES!_

You: _â€|I hate you_

Astrid: _I know, but I forgive you, because love makes people say things they don't mean_

You: _â€|I'm ignoring you _

Astrid: _Good luck with that! so you gonna ask him out or what?_

Astrid: _Fine, I'll just do it for you_

You: _Oh if you so much as mention it to him I will murderer you in your sleep!_

Astrid: _Ooooh, I'm so scared!_

You: _Slowly_

Astrid: _Doubt it_

You: _And painfully _

Astrid: _I'd like to see that_

You: _With a spork! _

Astrid: _Really? You're gonna murdure me with Sporkman? _

You: _â€|_

Astrid: _Your smiling now, aren't you?_

You: _Screw you!_

Astrid: _HA! Just admit it already, you like him!_

You: _Fine, yes, alright, I like him! Happy now? Not that it changes anything._

Astrid: _Well of course it does! I don't see why you won't just ask him out!_

You: _Cause best case he says no and we move in, worst case he's werided out and never wants to see me again. _

Astrid: _I can guarantee we won't be weirded out_

You: _Oh? And hows that? Physic powers finally come in?_

Astrid: _No, but he didn't mind when I mentioned you needed a boyfriend._

You: _YOU DID WHAT!? WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU DO THAT? YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO GO AROUND TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT MY BUISNESS! I CANT BEALIVE YOUASTRID! _

Astrid: _Seemed pretty interested in that little tidbit actually_

You: _"he did?"_

Astrid: _Yup, did a double take and got all "thinky" on me_

You: _"?"_

Astrid: _Well I'll be damned, Hiccup Haddock speechless. Looks like hell has finally frozen over, looks like I'm finally getting that pony. _

You: _You never wanted a pony_

Astrid: _Not the point! Ask him out damn it! I'm not going to let you ignore this and miss this opportunity._

Astrid: _I mean it Hiccup_

Astrid: _Just ask him, don't be so nervous! Just go for it and hope for the best. _

Astrid: _Hello?"_

Hiccup let out a growl of frustration as he glared at his phone, which he had finally gotten around to digging out of the backpack his father had dropped off. Astrid had been hounding him for the last couple hours, since he had woken feeling, shall we say less than restful, and she showed no signs of letting up. She meant well, but she didn't understand. She was Astrid, she was pretty and popular, guys were lining up (almost literally) to ask her out. Hiccup was "well, Hiccup! What kind of guy would possibly be interested in a lanky, pale, freakishly freckled, skin and bones, antisocial, and newly suicidal, loser? His many "many many many failings aside, there was one even bigger issue with following Astrid's advice. No matter how hard he tried Hiccup couldn't keep his eyes from returning to Astrid's last text _'hope for the best'_. He couldn't help a self-deprecating laugh as he thought about that phrase over and over again, the impossible word running through his mind, mocking him; _Hope_.

How long had it been since he'd last hoped? How long had it been since he'd even tried? He knew exactly how long it had been, almost ten months to the day, since he'd last been able to find it in himself to hope...Since the last time he'd spoken with her "Hiccup clenched his jaw as he blinked away the tears he could feel forming in the corners of his eyes.

*_knock-knock knock-knock-knock "knock-knock*_ Hiccup started at the sharp rapping on his door. Swallowing and clearing his throat he called out a quiet "come in." He froze when, much to his surprise, a snow white head popped into the room, a bright smile fixed just beneath bright blue eyes; Hiccup could feel the corners of his mouth lifting even as his brain was still processing his unexpected visitor. " "Jack?" He finally managed to stutter out the lame response.

"Hey Hiccup." Jack said, his smile falling slightly as he got a better look at Hiccup's face, his eye quickly taking in how watery the brunette's eyes were. "You alright dude?"

"What? Oh, ya fine." Hiccup tilted his head in confusion for a second before realizing what Jack meant and bringing a hand up to wipe his eyes. It wasn't a lie though, at that exact moment Hiccup couldn't think of anything that was wrong.

"You sure? I can come back later is this is a bad time." Jack said, motioning toward the door halfheartedly.

"No!" Hiccup said quickly, a slight blush creeping into his cheeks as he elaborated "I'm fine, really. Just tired, not been sleeping the best in the new place." It wasn't a complete lie, he had been having trouble sleeping. Before Jack had a chance to respond Hiccup continued, changing the subject of so subtly "So what brings you here at this hour? Shouldn't you be pretending to pay attention in class right now?"

"Hey! I pay attention in class! â€¦sometimes." Jack said, trying to deflect Hiccup's question.

"I'm sure it's quite the ordeal for you too."

"Oh haha." Jack said sarcastically from where he had taken his usual seat and turned on the TV, flipping through channels so fast Hiccup could barely make out what was on. They settled on some documentary on quite possibly the creepiest looking fish Hiccup had ever seen, all spiny and frilly with giant teeth and tentacles.

"You ditching class then?" Hiccup said after about twenty minutes of comfortable silence.

Jack let out a little sigh and refused to look at Hiccup before he spoke "Uh, noâ€¦I uh, heh, I got suspended for the rest of the week."

"Wow, there has to be a story behind that." Hiccup said expectantly.

Jack rubbed the back of his neck nervously "It's nothing really, just got into a fight with some idiot during study hall."

"You? Got into a fight? I didn't think you were the hoodlum type Mr. Frost."

"Well I didn't start the fight!" Jack said defensively.

"Oh, did he try and steal your hairgel?"

Jack rolled his eyes "No."

"Hmmm, they refuse to let you copy their homework? Make fun of your too-shoe-things? Try and say comic books aren't real?" Hiccup was having fun with this now "Oh, I know, I bet they-"

"It's not a joke!" Jack shouted. Hiccup started, broken out of the train of thought and noticed how stiff Jack's back was, and how his fists were balled into fists: Hiccup had never seen Jack look any bit angry and he had to admit it was a tiny bit frightening, he kind of looked like he was going to snap any second.

"Whoa, sorry. I didn't mean anything by it Jack, I was ju-" Hiccup

was silenced as Jack held up a finger. Jack's piercing blue eyes darted to Hiccup's as he said spoke quietly.

"They were talking about you."

"Really? What about me?" Hiccup's voice had fallen to match Jack's. Looking at the white haired teen Hiccup could tell he didn't want to answer, his jaw was set and he was refusing to look at Hiccup.

"Jackâ€¦what were they saying?"

"He asked me aboutâ€¦Monday. He saidâ€¦said I shouldn't haveâ€¦wasted my timeâ€¦ya knowâ€¦calling anybody." Jack's face had gone hard, his jaw clenched and his eyes gleamed angrily.

"Ohâ€¦" Hiccup said lamely, that certainly wasn't what he had expected, not that he was surprised honestly.

"Yeah. So I hit him."

"Oh, well thanksâ€¦I think. I wish you hadn't though." Hiccup was surprised by how quickly Jack's gaze shot up to meet his own. He continued hesitantly "I mean, it's not really worth the trouble. Besides, it's not like there wrong."

"DON'T...Don't say that Hiccup." Jack started to shout before getting control of himself.

"Why not? I tried to kill myself Jack," Those words felt strange on Hiccup's tongue even as he said them. "that doesn't exactly scream 'promising future.'"

Jack was standing now, taking several steps toward Hiccup to stop a foot from the edge of the brunette's bed. Jack could hardly contain himself, hearing the smaller boy lying before him, looking so beaten and broken (and adorable and precious and perfect), saying that made Jack want to scream. Suddenly the thought of what might have happened had Jack not been in that bathroom, which had always been repugnant, was now downright horrifying. He refused to think of it. "Look Hiccup, I get it, I know how yo-"

"Don't. Don't say you know how I feel." Hiccup's voice was suddenly cold. He was tired of people telling him 'I know how you feel' or 'It gets better, trust me' nobody knew how he felt, nobody could understand what it was like to live every day with the crushing guilt he carried.

"I do understand though Hiccup, you-"

"NO YOU DON'T! Everyone says that, everyone knows how I'm feeling, everyone knows what to do to fix me, everyone _understands_ and I'm fucking sick of it!" Hiccup was shouting now, he knew he sounded like overdramatic teen but he didn't care, he had started and now he couldn't stop himself if he wanted to. "Nobody understands what it feels like to wake up every morning _knowing_ that things won't _ever_ be better, won't _ever_ be fixed, because you can't go back and change the past no matter how much you want to! You can't go back and fix things, you can't make things right, you can'tâ€¦you can't take things back." Hiccup's voice broke as he finished and he bit his lower lip, sucking in a shaky breath threw his nose and trying desperately to fight back the tears he knew were coming.

"You might be surprised." Jack's voice was calm when he spoke and Hiccup looked up at him to see a sad smile on his face, slowly he stepped forward until he was at Hiccup's bedside. Hiccup was about to speak, but his voice failed him when Jack reached around his head, grabbed the back of his hoodie and pulled it off over his head. A bright pink blush crept into Hiccup's cheeks even through all the anger, sadness, and grief raging inside him. Jack was lean with lightly defined abs, the skin on his chest was even paler than his face, which was impressive. Hiccup's eyes, which were busy ogling the suddenly shirtless runway model before him froze when they fell upon a thin white line about four inches long that ran across Jack's stomach at a slight angle.

Jack smiled at Hiccup and took a seat on the bed as he said "Let me tell you about how I met my best friend Sandy."

****There you go, giant huge freaking chapter! Sorry to anyone who doesn't like long chapters, I can promise the next one won't be this long! Hope you enjoyed it, thanks to everyone who's followed, favorited and commented on this story, your feedback means so much to me ^^^***

4. Chapter 4

****Been out of town for a few days so it took longer to edit this than I would have liked, but it's done now ^^ I had to go through like 5 versions of the first part of this chapter until I was pleased with it so that didn't help either -- I want to take a second here to say thanks to everyone who reads my stories, and give a special thank you to everyone who leaves such wonderful and kind reviews. They mean a lot and are a big uplifter when I start to think this whole "I wanna be a writer" this is just a silly dream. :) So once again, thank you!****

****Alright, enough sappy stuff, here's what you came for! Enjoy
^^****

Had you told Hiccup earlier that day that within a few hours' time there would be a shirtless Jack Frost sitting on his bed, he'd have told you you were crazy, and if you told him he'd be creaming at said shirtless Jack—well actually he'd probably buy that. The entire situation was still processing itself in Hiccup's head when Jack took a steadying breath before speaking. "I suppose the best place to start would be the very beginning, easier than going back later." Had the situation been different, and had Jack's face not held so much sorrow, Hiccup would have retorted with a snarky 'yes that tends to be the best place to begin'. Things being as they were though Hiccup merely sat there, his eyes locked on Jack's face (a rather impressive feat considering their other options at the moment) as the taller teen stared at the wall. "I was born in a small town out in Pennsylvania, it was a nice place to live, plenty of other kids to hang around with, an arcade we'd always go to, this little pond we used to go swimming in during the summer." A sad smile stretched across Jack's face as he thought back "Oh, me and my younger sister that is." He said as he noticed Hiccup's confusion at his use of the plural.

"I didn't know you had a sister?" Hiccup said quietly, his anger from

earlier having been completely dispelled by Jack's sudden somber demeanor.

Jack turned to Hiccup and gave him a small smile "Yeah, her name was Emma, and she was such a little shit." Jack chuckled softly "Not that I wasn't back then, I tormented her day and night, I was her big brother after all, and she got me back for every single prank I pulled. This one time, like the third or fourth time I'd ever died my hair, she got ahold of my dye somehow and switched it. Long story short I spend the next month with bright neon pink hair." Jack was laughing softly now and Hiccup felt himself getting pulled in as well, joining in with a soft chuckle.

"Oh wow, are there pictures? I've got to meet this girl." The change in Jack's demeanor was almost frightening, his smile was replaced with an impassive look in the span of a single blink and he turned back to the wall before speaking, his voice a hoarse whisper.

"She's dead." Hiccup froze, not knowing what to say; Jack's use of the past tense was suddenly painfully obvious.

"Jackâ€¦Iâ€¦I'm sorry." Hiccup stammered, not knowing what else to say.

"Me too." Jack shot Hiccup an incredibly sad smile before extending his arms behind his torso and leaning back on them. Palms flat on the bed, looking up at the ceiling.

"You don't have to tell me this Jack..." Jack forestalled anymore objections with a dismissing wave of his hand.

"I was eleven, it was the first big snow of the year and I was bouncing off the walls, I bugged my parents incessantly until they agreed to take me and Emma sledding. There was this giant hill we'd always go to every year, it was a bit of a drive but it was worth it. When we got there me and Emma were so wired, I practically flew up the hill. It was the perfect sledding day too; the snow was still soft and fluffy but just wet enough that it would pack together a little bit and make the sled go faster. Me and Emma went up and down that hill more times than I could count; our parents finally had to drag us back to the car when it got too dark to sled." Hiccup could see the scene Jack painted before him, a little bright eyed Jack running alongside a little girl to bundled up in winter clothing for Hiccup to make out any details, running up the hill and speeding back downâ€¦it would have been a happy scene except for the ending Hiccup knew was coming.

The small smile that had crept onto Jack's face while he described the day of sledding vanished as he continued "We were driving home, it was dark and me and Emma were arguing over what station to listen to on the radioâ€¦funny how you remember stuff like that so clearly. It gets kinda fuzzy after that, everything just happened so fast. All of a sudden there was a horn blaring and then my mom screamed and my head hit the seat in front of me. I remember a lot of shouting, and bright light and someone talking to me and then I was stumbling down the road. There was a big bag, I hit something coldâ€¦and I woke up two days later in the hospital with a broken arm, missing the hair on half my headâ€¦suddenly an orphan and only child..."

"Jackâ€¦" Hiccup wanted to say something but he had no idea what, the

pain on his friend's face was all too familiar to the brunette and he felt the familiar clenching in his chest.

"I made the doctor's tell me what happened when I was in the hospital, fought them every time they tried to do anything until they did. We hit a truck transporting chemicals of some sort. The collision cracked the tank and when whatever it was hit the engine it ignited. The way we crashed jammed the front doors shut, one of my parents must have gotten me out of my buckle and shoved me out of the car though because I was stumbling away from the crash when the fire reached the main tank. I was thrown forty feet through the air by the explosion, only survived because I landed in one of those big piles of snow the plows leave." Jack's voice was so calm as he spoke that Hiccup was shocked to see the tears run from the corner of Jack's eye down the side of his head and onto the thin hospital blanket. "They said that being that close to the explosionâ€|death would have been all but instant-" Jack's voice broke then and his shoulder's shook once before he took a deep breathe through his nose.

At that moment Hiccup felt like the biggest fool in existence as he thought back to just what he'd so recently been shouting at the boy now crying in front of him, and he realized that Jack understood the loss he felt completely. Slowly Hiccup reached out his hand and rested in on Jack's, giving the pale teen's finger's a little squeeze. Jack took a deep breath before looking at Hiccup and giving a little smile, his thumb coming up to brush against Jack's in acknowledgement. He continued, his voice only the tiniest bit shaky, "That's how I ended up in foster care. It wasn't that bad really, but I wasn't exactly a 'model child' at that pointâ€|I was grief stricken and angry and I felt like it was my fault because if I hadn't been so insistent on going sledding it never would have happened."

"That's ridiculous Jack, you had nothing to do with what happened!" Hiccup suddenly shouted, his voice angry.

"Try telling that to an eleven year old." Jack said, his face splitting into a self-mocking smile for a split second. "Anyway," Jack forestalled any more comments "the people are always so understanding at the start, doing whatever they can to helpâ€|but eventually they want the angry little boy to get over it and be happy. After a while they stopped even trying to find homes for me and just dumped me in a group home. It got progressively worse from there, not that I really let on, I was already a "troubled child" didn't see a need to add depression onto the apparently long list of what was wrong with me." Hiccup understood where Jack was coming from all too well, the sympathy and "understanding" got aggravating enough when people thought you were just sad. Jack took a deep breath before continuing, his face once again directed at the wall. "One day I had just finally had enough, I didn't want to feel the pain anymore, I didn't want to go on. I stole one of the other kid's CD players and stashed under her brother's bed; while the adults were breaking up the insuring fight I went into the kitchen snatched a steak knife and ran back to my room. I guess I'm lucky it was such a spur of the moment thing and I had no idea what I was doing, didn't have time to research or anything." At that Jack shot a sideways glance at Hiccup and the tiniest spark of shame flared in Hiccup for a second. "I took the knife and, well, did this." Jack gestured to the scar, probably about six inches long that started on the right of his chest and went down in a diagonal to end just above his abs on the left side. Hiccup looked at the thin white line with horror, the innocuous looking scar

evidence of the pain Jack had been feeling back then, the brunette thought of his own arm, still tightly bandaged at the moment, thought about the then white lines that would likely adorn it as well. Hiccup was shaken from his thoughts by Jack's voice "Hurt like a bitch but I just bit down on a pillow and tried not to make any noise, I didn't want anyone to find me. I guess I passed out from the pain, or at least was too delirious to remember anything, and I woke up in a hospital bed with a little blond kid I'd seen at the house occasionally sitting next to my bed."

"Sandy?" Hiccup asked quietly after a long moment, most of his brain still processing what Jack had just told him. Jack had really meant it when he said he understood how Hiccup felt and Hiccup had been too self-centered to even consider that anyone else could have possibly gone through the same thing he had. He'd shouted until Jack felt it necessary to relieve these obviously painful memories—god he was such an ass!

"Yeah, Sandy." Jack said as he looked over at Hiccup with a genuine smile on his face. "I woke up and the nurse told me he was the one who'd saved me—and I promptly started shouting at him as loud as I could. I must have shouted at him for ten minutes without a break, and the whole time he just sat there smiling in this understanding way that just pissed me off more and more. When he wouldn't answer me I thought he was making fun of me somehow and that just made me shout more, finally I shouted myself into a coughing fit; he got up and left the room, I thought maybe he was tired of getting yelled at but he came back a minute later with a water bottle." Jack was smiling again now, a thin trail of dried tears leading down his cheeks and the odd feeling that had settled itself in Hiccup's chest the only evidence of his earlier distress. "After I stopped coughing Sandy pointed to his throat and shook his head but I didn't get it, dense as I was, he had to write I am mute on a piece of paper before I finally got it. I learned one of Sandy's best qualities that day, he's an amazing listener. Not cause he can't interrupt either, because he can and will, usually by throwing the nearest object at your head—guy has amazing aim too. No, Sandy is such a good listener because he, heh, well, he doesn't judge. He's one of the most understanding people I've ever met. I started talking with him and—well everything kinda just came spilling out, he's got this way of getting you to say what's really on your mind—" Jack looked off into the distance as his voice trailed off.

"I ended up telling him everything, about my parents, about how guilty—how alone I felt." Jack's face had fallen to a more neutral expression, his eyes suddenly shining with unshed tears. "It felt good, and while I'm certainly no Sandy I've learned a little from him." Hiccup wanted to say something, wanted to ask Jack why he'd told him this, wanted to thank him, wanted to do more than stare blankly at the white haired boy that had just recounted a story so strikingly similar to his own it was eerie. Finally He managed to force a small smile in return, along with an oh so elegant "uh—" Thankfully Jack saved him from having to respond with anything more by speaking again. "I guess I'm just saying, if you wanna talk with someone, well, I'm right here." Jack gestured to himself as he spoke, his smile shifting back toward its usual full self.

Hiccup was once again lost for words. There was a part of him that wanted to take Jack up on the offer, wanted desperately to just tell this person who he'd met less than a week ago about every nightmare

that had tormented him for months now. He would have liked nothing better than to finally just talk to _someone_. He certainly wouldn't be talking to his dad about it, he could have spoken to Astrid but he wanted someone to listen, not pity him or suggest ways to make him 'better'. Hiccup wanted to tell Jack, but he couldn't. Telling Jack would involve telling his new friend about himself, and that wasn't something Hiccup was ready to talk about, even if Astrid had outed him already he still wasn't about to talk to Jack about that. His mind still at war with itself Hiccup said "Thank you Jack, that means a lot, and thank you for telling me all thatâ€¦it couldn't have been easy."

Jack extricated the hand that Hiccup hadn't even realized he was still holding and waved in a dismissive manner, smiling brightly at Hiccup.

"So you said you got into a fight with Snotlout," Hiccup said, moving to change the subject "yet you don't look like you went up against someone his size."

Jack let out an amused laugh "I'd better not, Aster would kick my ass himself if I got beat after all the time he spent teaching me to fight."

Hiccup quirked his head to the side "Aster?"

Jack started for a moment, as though the question had caught him off guard "Yeah, he's my older brother."

"Oh, I thought you had saidâ€¦" Hiccup trailed off, not wanting to finish the sentence. Thinking back to their previous conversations Hiccup realized that while they had spoken extensively about likes, dislikes, hobbies, and other personal details, both of them had completely avoided the topic of family, of course he could understand why now that he knew Jack's story.

"He's my adopted brother, my parents adopted him like a decade before they did me. They weren't planning on adopting again but I guess my mom heard about my story somehow and decided to meet me, and, well, you can guess how that went."

"Yes, clearly you tricked them somehow." Hiccup said, the playful tone returning to his voice. Jack raised his eyebrows and gave Hiccup a look before sticking his tongue out at the brunette. "So it's the two of you then, no other siblings?"

"Yeah, me and Aster, and mom and dad of courseâ€¦oh and Aster's boyfriend."

Hiccup couldn't help starting at Jack's words, even as his heart sank a tiny bit, Jack had probably just been thinking about his brother when Astrid had outed him yesterday, not interested himself. "So your brother, he's, uh, gay, then?"

Jack shook his head "Bi, been with this guy for like four years now I think it's beenâ€¦" Jack trialed off, a contemplative look on his face.

"Ah, that's, un, cool. So he thought you how to fight?"

"Yeah, Aster thought I should be able to defend myself after some kids at my old school started giving me crap for b-â€|for some stuff." Jack stopped himself mid-sentence and glanced sideways at Hiccup before continuing. _It's not what you're thinking_ Hiccup immediately told himself as that tiny spark of hole kindled itself one more in his chest, resisting his best efforts to smother it. At that point Jack seemed to realize he was still shirtless because he started, turning a little red-faced, and slid his hoodie back on; Hiccup had to suppress a disappointed sigh.

"So what's your family like?" Hiccup asked, feeling suddenly curious, before adding "I don't mean to be nosey, you don't have to answer...obviously."

"Nah, it's cool." Jack said before launching into a description of his family. From what Hiccup could gather the five of them lived outside of town in a "pretty big" house. Hiccup suspected Jack's parents were pretty well off though he seemed somewhat uncomfortable talking about their jobs. He spent the most time talking about Aster and all the 'shit we pulled when I was younger' several of the anecdotes had Hiccup nearly in tears with laughter, and a few made him wonder how Jack had actually survived to his current age. From there they moved on to other topics, falling back into the comfortable routine they'd developed over the last few days. They chatted idly, the serious mood of the morning forgotten in the pleasant conversation. It would have been nearly perfect were it not for the growing nagging voice (which bore an uncanny resemblance to that of a certain blond with boundary issues) in the back of Hiccup's mind trying to convince him to make some sort of move. That of course let to Hiccup double checking all his actions to be sure they were 'benevolent' which was starting to do a number on his nerves.

Things went on that same way until just after noon when, just as the two were debating what to do about lunch, the door opened and Astrid strode into the room, her eyes flicking between Jack and Hiccup. "The whole school is buzzing over your little incident Frost." She said with an impressed grin "I didn't know you had in in ya."

Jack groaned and covered his face with a hand "Greaaaaaat...just what I needed." Hiccup couldn't quite suppress a chuckle at Jack's distress. Looking back up at the two of them suddenly Jack said "What do you want to eat, I'll go get something."

"You don't have to; you're always getting the food." Hiccup said, surprised by Jack's abrupt demeanor and feeling a little guilty (and also not keen on the idea of alone time with Astrid at the moment, he had a unpleasant hunch he knew what she would want to talk about).

"It's cool, besides I've got to make a call." Jack stood, took both their orders and slipped out of the room, slipping his phone from his pocket as the door clicked closed behind him.

"So did you ask him out yet" Astrid said simply, wasting no time as she hoped up to sit cross legged on the table.

Hiccup threw his head back and let out a loud groan of exasperation. "Oh, not too bad actually, thanks for asking Astrid, how has _your_ day been so far?" Hiccup said, sarcasm dripping from every syllable.

"Pretty good I guess, classes went by fast, I got an A on my first Bio testâ€|oh, and my best friend suddenly stopped texting me and then I show up to find the guy he likes here _again, _and he's wasting an opportunity _again_." Astrid replied, he voice far more airy and pleasant then was natural.

Hiccup sighed again as he lifted his head to glare at the all too smug blond sitting on his table "You just aren't going to let this go, are you?"

"Nope." She said with a grin "I don't see why you're being so obstinate with this! I told you about last night, what more do you need?"

Hiccup's face darkened at her words, he'd forgotten about that "Oh yes, I'd forgotten about that." Astrid's face fell at Hiccup's serious tone. "I know you were trying to help, that's the only reason I'm still talking to you right now, but Astrid, you _outed_ me to Jack. I don't care what your reasons were, you crossed the line."

Astrid looked down for just a split second before meeting Hiccup's gaze "You're right, I did. I shouldn't have done that and I'm sorry Hiccup."

Hiccup nodded "Don't let it happen again."

An uncomfortable silence, something Hiccup was very unaccustomed to with Astrid, stretched between them for several minutes before Astrid, glancing at Hiccup out of the corner of her eye said "So did you ask him?"

Hiccup rolled his eyes even as a small smirk split his hard expression, shaking his head with an amused chuckle. "No, and I don't plan to. I'm perfectly content being friends with Jack right now and I don't intend on doing anything to mess that up so could you please let this go?"

Astrid looked at Hiccup for a long moment before sighing in resignation "Fine, I'll let it go. _For now._" Well that was the best Hiccup was likely to get, so he accepted it without complaint, now if only the Astrid voice in his head was so easy to silence.

"So Hiccup," Astrid said, her voice holding a joking tone "_How was your day?_"

_Hey dude _Jack tapped out on his phone as he walked, careful to mind where he was going and not run into anyone in the busy hallway.

It was a matter of seconds before the response came in _Oh! The elusive Jackson Frost has reappeared as last!_

Ya, sry I've been quite man, I've been spending time with hiccup and just sorta got busy

_Really Jack? Couldn't that have waited until the poor boy was out of the hospital at least? And what if a nurse had walked in? Have some dignity man! _Jack guffawed loudly at Sandy's joke even as a slight blush tainted his pale cheeks, drawing several incredulous looks from

passersby.

-- Totally not what I meant and you know it!_

Yeah, but you pitched it right over the plate, I couldn't not swing.

Fair enough

So how are things going with Hiccup?

_Pretty good actually, he seems alright, haven't noticed anything worrying, no second attempt _

That's good, I assume you've been spending time with him and that's why you're ignoring me?

Yeahâ€¦|sorry about that, like I've said I've been kind of distracted. There's something about this guy Sandy...

What do you mean "something"?

I can't really explain it, like I want to get to know him and I feel like I already know him all at the same time.

That's an impressive contradiction there Jack. Why do you feel like you know him? What do you talk about?

â€¦I told him about my parentsâ€¦|

â€¦wow

Your telling meâ€¦|I didn't plan it it just happened, I wanted him to know he wasn't as alone as he was feeling.

So now what?

That's what I was hoping you could help with --

Well, you like him, yes?

Yes, that's pretty obvious at this point

Well the, does he share your "interests"

I don't know, his friend did use the word "boyfriend" when we were leaving the other day, but he hasn't mentioned anything and he doesn't seem interested, not that I can pick up on anyway.

_Oh yes, because any person interested in guys must by default be interested in you, I'd forgotten. _

Not my fault I'm so damn sexy :P

And oh so humble

_The humblest _

So you asking him out, or are you just going to keep flirting with me?

Well, flirting with you never really got me anywhere

That because I'm way out of your league

Ouch

Truth hurts. Asking out Hiccup, yes or no?

I don't know! I want toâ€|but I won't want to ruin the friendship with weirdnessâ€|

Just ask him Jack, we both know you're going to in the end, best do it before you agonize over it for a week don't you think?

_And how do you know that? Last time I checked you weren't one of the voices in my head. _

Oh please, we've been best friends for years, I could tell you what kind of pizza you're in the mood for right now. And if you do ever hear my voice in your head do tell me, I'd love to know what it sounds like.

_Ha-ha. _

_Seriously Jack, just ask him. I repeat, better before you spend a week freaking out over it. _

â€|you are a bastard

There ya go, see that wasn't so hard now was it?

â€|why do I even bother arguing with you?

I don't know, we should have moved past that long ago, not my fault it never seems to stick with you.

I guess I'm holding out hope someday I'll be right

You keep that hope alive Jack. So you asking him then?

â€|fine

Good boy, let me know how it goes

Of course

And Jack?

Yes?

Good luck :)

Jack let out a sigh as he slipped his phone into his pocket, having finally made it to the front of the unfortunately long line at the cafeteria. Sandy was probably right in this situation, as he usually wasâ€|actually, Jack couldn't think of a single time his best friend had been wrong about situations like thisâ€|maybe he really should stop arguing with him? Well he could work that out later, right now

he was faced with a very difficult decision, risk complete and total humiliation by asking out someone who in all likelihood probably wasn't even interested in his gender, or endure the inevitable stream of endless grief he'd catch from Sandy if he chickened out now—he wasn't sure which has a more daunting prospect.

"Hello sir, what can I get you?" The peppy voice of the young girl behind the counter jarred Jack from the argument currently going on inside his head.

"Uh—huh?" He said eloquently, his face scrunching as his brain tried to catch up with what was going on around him.

The girl smiled and stifled a little giggle behind nails painted a bright pink "What can I get you?"

"Oh, uh—" Jack had to think a moment before ordering food for Hiccup, Astrid, and himself, the girl hurrying to grab what he asked for and place each meal in its own plastic take away container.

"Alright," Said the cheery girl as she placed the take away containers into one large plastic bag "Is that it?"

Jack was about to say yes when something in the dessert section caught his eye and he smiled as he pointed at the little plastic container "One of those too," If he was going to do this, might as well stack the deck as much in his favor as he could right? "And two of those and that's it." He added as an afterthought. Still best not to be _too_ obvious.

Putting the final addition into the bag the girl went over to the cash register and entered Jack's order "That will be forty-six eighty-seven." Jack pulled his credit card from his wallet and swiped the plastic through the keypad, waiting for the little screen to say "approved" before replacing the card and grabbing the food. "Have a good day."

"You too." Jack said automatically, about to turn to leave when she continued.

"I'm sure your friend will be fine, the doctors here are really good." She said with a smile.

Jack stared at her dumbly for a moment before looking at her with suspicion "How..what?"

"Well something seemed to be bothering you, and this is a hospital so I just kinda assumed." She said with a faint blush which made Jack think of a certain someone—yeah, Sandy was probably right about this one too.

"Ah, well then thanks." Jack said, returning the smile before turning to head back to Hiccup's room, feeling kind of like he was climbing the high dive, the only question now was would he have the guts to jump?

"You get lost?" Hiccup said in a joking tone when Jack walked into the room holding a large bag of food.

"Is that the thanks I get for walking halfway across the building and waiting in a ginormous line to get you food?"

"Did you just say ginormous?"

"Hmf! No appreciation!" Jack said dramatically he turned on his heel, putting his back to Hiccup and handed Astrid a plastic container that opened to reveal a large helping of lasagna.

"I beg your pardon good sir, you have my most heartfelt thanks." Hiccup, his own voice dropping to a lower octave as he spoke.

"Now that's more like it." Jack said, striding over to hand Hiccup his own meal which turned out to be a rather poor attempt at steak and a baked potato, but Hiccup was hungry and it was food. None of them spoke much while devoured their meals in the typical teenaged fashion-quickly. As Hiccup finished his last bite he leaned back against his pillows and gave a contented sigh.

"Well, I can't say it was particularly good, but it sure hit the spot."

"Hope you saved a little room." Jack said with that increasingly familiar pleased grin.

"For what?" Hiccup asked curiously.

"Dessert of course!" Jack all but sang as he reached into the bag and pulled out a small plastic bowl and two paper wrapped squares that were obviously popsicles. Hiccup had expected Jack to toss him a popsicle, assuming that he'd purchased whatever was in the bowl for himself; he was surprised then when Jack walked over and placed the bowl on his lap along with a spoon before tossing one of the popsicles to Astrid who caught it deftly. Hiccup took the container and cautiously opened it, a lopsided smile lifting the corners of his mouth as the lid popped off.

"Chocolate mousse?"

"You did say it was your favorite didn't you?" Jack said, the smallest hint of worry creeping into his voice as he spoke.

"That I did." Hiccup said, still slightly disbelieving. He was incredibly thankful that Jack was looking at him, and therefore unable to see the excessively pointed look Astrid was giving over his shoulder. So Jack had remembered and bought him his favorite dessert, that didn't mean anything, there were plenty of other completely innocent explanations for Jack's behavior! Not wanting to just sit there and stare at the dessert like an idiot Hiccup grabbed the spoon, took a big bite of the mousse, and did everything within his power not to gag. He wasn't quite sure how someone messed up chocolate, but somehow the kitchen here had managed it. Jack's smile brightened, apparently having confused Hiccup's widening eyes for enjoyment, which left Hiccup in the unfortunate position of either souring the nice gesture by spitting it out, or stomaching the remainder of the sludge. Unable to bring himself to spoil the bright smile on Jack's face Hiccup forced a smile as he finished the rest of the mercifully small cup in three bites.

"Thanks," Hiccup said with what he hoped was an appreciative smile.

"You shouldn't have."

"My pleasure, glad you liked it." Jack said, returning the smile as he worked on his own dessert with gusto and, really, there should be rules on the proper way to eat a popsicle in public because the way Jack was doing it was just plain indecent! Hiccup looked away from Jack as a faint blush started to creep into his cheeks, a decision he immediately regretted as his eye met Astrid's who promptly jerked her head toward Jack and raised her eyebrows suggestively which only served to deepen Hiccup's blush.

"So Jack," Astrid said suddenly, her voice far too cheery for Hiccup's likening "I guess were now members of the same club."

Jack cocked his head and looked at her, distracting him from his Popsicle, thank the heavens, and asked "Uhâ€¦what?"

"Yeah, the 'People who have decked Snotlout' club, I can't imagine it's a very exclusive club though, what with a personality like his." Hiccup relaxed and muffled a laugh in his hand at Astrid's comment, apparently she was actually going to honor his request and drop the whole 'him asking Jack out thing.'

"Oh?" Jack asked with a laugh "You've punched him too? What did he do to get on your bad side?"

"He kept asking me out, which was fine, I just said no, but he didn't get it apparently because he kept on trying to make date plans like I'd said yes. Finally after about a week I snapped and decked him in the parking lot after school."

"Wow, remind me not to annoy you. I'm betting he didn't try and sue _you_ huh?"

"Will do, and of course not, I don't think anybody outside this room but him even know about it, not exactly the kind of thing he'd want to spread around."

"I'll bet." Jack said, his signature grin on his face as he bounced over to his chair and flopped down with a stretch and a content sigh.

Hiccup was just about to ask Jack what he'd meant by Snotlout not suing Astrid when Astrid spoke up again "So what about you Jack, ever have anyone just not get you weren't interested? Course looking the way you do you must be fighting the more shallow ones of with a stich huh?" Jack started and looked at Astrid, Hiccup stiffened and glared at her, so much for dropping itâ€¦|

"Oh, uh, well, I mean not really that much no. There were a few sure, but I-uh, wasn't really interestedâ€¦|" Jack said as he ran his hand through the back of his hair, clearly embarrassed at Astrid's intrusive question.

"_Is that so?_" Astrid said, not even bothering to try and hide the pointed look she aimed at Hiccup who sat there glaring at her, having concluded that, unfortunately, leaping from his bead and stabbing Astrid with her leftover lunch spork would indeed raise to many questions at the present. Several rather awkward heartbeats passed, Hiccup glaring at Astrid, Astrid looking pleasantly at Jack, and Jack

looking anywhere but the two of them.

Hiccup didn't think he'd ever been more grateful to see anyone in his entire life then the moment his door opened and a short nurse with long black hair entered the room, the florescent light threw her face into sharp relief as she surveyed the room, giving a clearly disapproving look at the scattered remains of their lunch. Putting on a falsely sweet smile she walked over to Hiccup and started undoing the bandages on his right arm. "How are you feeling today sweetie?" she asked, her voice far too cheery for the situation.

"Fine." Hiccup responded blandly, averting his eyes as the nurse removed the last of his bandages to reveal the long line of stitches that adorned his arm.

"Have you needed to use the morphine over much?" She asked in the same sickly sweet voice as she smeared some clear cream over the wound before pulling a roll of fresh bandages from a pocket somewhere.

"No, it doesn't hurt that much anymore."

"Good, good. It appears to be healing well, as long as you take care and don't break the stitches I don't think it will scar to badly." She was rapping his arm back up now, binding the bandages tightly around Hiccup's thin arm before securing them in place. "There, well sweetie, you're healing very well. As long as nothing comes up tonight I think you should be fine to head home tomorrow."

"Really?" Hiccup said, unable to mask the excitement in his voice "Yes I believe so, a doctor will have to take a look later tonight for the final say, and someone will have to teach you how to properly care for the injury of course. If the doctor gives the OK we'll contact your legal guardian and they can come sign you out tomorrow."

"Alright, thank you."

"Of course sweetie, keep it up." She said, patting Hiccup on the cheek before turning to leave "Do clean up after yourselves." She said without looking at Jack or Astrid and closed the door behind her.

"So you'll be a free man tomorrow!" Jack exclaimed as soon as the door clicked shut, all awkwardness forgotten in light of Hiccup's upcoming liberation.

"Hopefully, but I'll probably be stuck here most of the day still since my dad won't be able to sign me out till he gets off work in the evening."

"Well, I'm still suspended, I don't see why I couldn't come keep you company till he pays your bail."

"When did I get arrested? Not really the thing I'd expect I'd be able to forget."

"That is some serious memory loss man, maybe you shouldn't be leaving this place after all huh?"

"I think you've just driven me insane."

"In less than a week? Wow that's a new record for me, I should get myself one of those little trophies to celebrate." Hiccup let out a snort, unable to keep his composure any longer, Jack joining in a moment later; Hiccup's laughter was cut short as he met Astrid's incredibly pointed gaze, her eyebrows completely invisible behind her bangs as she jerked her head toward Jack and mouthed 'ask him.' Anger flared briefly in Hiccup, followed by another, less familiar feeling, the Astrid in his head that had been bothering him all day combining with the one sitting in front of him pushed him over some previously unknown edge in his mind and he spoke before he lost his nerve.

"So, uh Jack," alright Hiccup, you can do this, just say calm, "would you want to, uh, after I get out of here that is, uh," now just say is, just ask him out and get it over with "hang out some time?" "you fucking coward.

"Sure! "er, Yeah, I'd like that" Jack said, the sincerity in his voice and smile was almost enough the counter Hiccup's anger with himself. "Here, let me give you my number so we can talk once you're out." Jack said, holding his hand out for Hiccup's phone. Well, at least he was getting Jack's number, that counted for something right?. Hiccup handed Jack his phone and accepted Jack's much fancier phone when it was offered, entering his own number into it. "There, now I can make sure you don't regain your sanity while you're away from me." Jack grinned as he returned Hiccup's phone and took his own back. Hiccup scrolled through his contacts, a task that didn't take very long, to find that Jack had entered his name 'Jack :)' and number.

From there the conversation turned to Hiccup's plans for when he got home, and general weekend plans from there (none of them had anything really going on), and somehow morphed into vacations, favorite places on the planet, places they wanted to visit and more as the day slipped by with idle conversation, Hiccup only slightly angry with himself now thought at least Astrid was apparently content to let him by with the attempt for today. During that time a doctor came in and cleared Hiccup to leave and the same too happy nurse from earlier reappeared to show him how to do his own bandages and care for his injury in general; Hiccup didn't want to look at wound but he was left little choice as the nurse insisted on seeing him do it correctly before letting him go.

When visiting hours finally ended Hiccup sat there, feeling the new though not entirely unexpected twinge as Jack leaned against the door, preparing to leave. Hiccup was going to open his mouth to offer a farewell, but a strange look came over Jack's face, making him hesitate; his expression looked strained, and more than a little nervous, as he looked at Hiccup, shooting a smile the brunette and bringing up a hand to rub the back of his neck. They held the slightly awkward silence for a moment longer before Jack, looking suddenly determined, took a step toward Hiccup and spoke. "Since you're getting out of here tomorrow, I was wondering if maybe you'd like to go see a movie "with me?" Jack's face was more than a little red as he looked up at Hiccup shyly.

Hiccup's jaw dropped in shock as he stared at Jack "Are you asking me out?" he asked, his tone all kinds of disbelieving.

"Uh, ya, I mean if you want to that is." Jack said, his expression turning hopeful.

Well then, that was certainly something right there wasn't it? All his worries and self-anger from earlier seemed not only pointless but incredibly silly. A feeling a giddiness suddenly swept through Hiccup and he started laughing, which, in retrospect, probably wasn't the right reaction given the circumstances. His face going bright red Jack turned on his heel and fled the room. Well shit. Working hard to pull himself together Hiccup glanced at Astrid who said "Well, that could have been handled better on your part."

"Please go bring him back." Hiccup said, suppressing another fit of giddy laughter.

A rather smug smile on her face Astrid got off the table she'd been sitting on and went after Jack, returning several long moments later leading, no, dragging Jack by the back of his hoodie, the pale teen's arms crossed over his chest as he heels drug along the ground, his face turned away refusing to make eye contact with anyone. Astrid deposited him unceremoniously at Hiccup's bedside where he promptly looked anywhere but Hiccup.

Taking a deep breath to keep his composure and calm his nerves Hiccup said "You know its polite to look at someone when you talk to them."

"Oh, and it's polite to laugh at someone when theyâ€|you know!" Jack snapped back defensively, his face still rather red.

"I wasn't laughing at you, idiot, I was laughing becauseâ€|because I've been trying to get the courage to ask you out all day." The dumbfounded look on Jack's face slowly, shifted to a cautious grin.

"Are you sayingâ€|" Jack said slowly

"That I'll go see a movie with you? Yes, under one condition."

"What's that?"

"I get to pick the movie." Hiccup said, has face braking into a broad grin at the same time Jack's did.

"Deal."

"So, I'll see you tomorrow then?"

"Of course, we can work out the details when I get here."

"Sounds like a plan."

"Feel better Hiccup." Jack said, leaning down once more to give Hiccup a quick (though not quite as quick as the previous night) hug before turning to head toward the door. "Night Hiccup."

"Bye Jack." Hiccup said, giving a little wave. As the door closed behind Jack Hiccup let out a huge breath, his entire body relaxed and he fell back into his pillows. That was every bit as terrifying as he

had feared it would be, even if it had ended better then he'd dared hope.

"Well, I gotta say, you were a lot calmer then I'd have thought you'd be." Astrid said from her perch on the table, the smuggest look Hiccup had ever seen on her face.

"Wait did I just do something? I think I blacked out there for a second."

Astrid chuckled at Hiccup's antics before smirking in a very self-satisfied way "I told you so." She said as she stood and walked over to Hiccup

"Yeah yeah, whateverâ€¦" he said, his mouth still stretched into a wide grin.

Leaning down to give him a quick hug goodbye she said "I'm happy for you Hiccup, I hope everything goes well."

"Thanks Astrid." He said, hugging her back.

"Have a good night Hiccup." She said as she headed out the door.

"You too!" He called after her as she left, leaving him to sit there grinning and replaying what had just happened over and over. There was a part of him that still couldn't believe it. He, Hiccup Haddock, quite possibly the most socially awkward kid on the planet, had a date with the single most amazing guy he'd ever met! Had you told him earlier that day that he would be spending the night thinking about the upcoming date, which _he_ had been _asked _on, with Jack Frost, well, he would have said you were crazy.

5. Chapter 5

****Wow this took forever to get out! -- Sry for that, life has been throwing a lot for me to deal with lately and I've been rather busy but most of that is out of the way now so yay for that! School is starting back up so I can't predict how my release schedule will be but I'm hoping it won't be any worse then its been (cause dear god that would just suck!) and it may even improve! T wanna say thanks for everyone who's reviewed this story and given me your feedback ^^ It means the world to me so thank you so much for those! Alright I'm done rambling now, on to the chapter!****

The door had barley clicked shut behind Jack before he let out a delighted laugh, his face splitting into a grin so bright and broad that it put the Orbitz lady to shame. Pulling his phone from his pocket, Jack started for the doors to the street where Aster would be waiting to pick him up with more then a little spring in his step as he went. Typing quickly he sent a text to Sandy _Well, I told him... :/_

Oh please, don't pretend he said no.

How the hell do you do that?

I don't do anything, you're the one who's so predictable

â€|

So you asked him out and he said yes then, when's the date?

Tomorrow

Wasting no time I see

Why wait, besides he gets out of the hospital tomorrow so it's kind of like a celebration thing.

So where you taking him?

Not entirely sure, we said movie but were going to actually plan it out tomorrow.

Movie? You're bringing him over then?

Introduce you to him on our first date? I don't think so, its bad enough I'll probably end up having to get a ride from Aster...

Jack you wound me, I'd never say anything bad about you to your date!

...you think you're funny don't you?

I've been told I can occasionally be amusing.

...maybe...IF you promise to behave.

_...you are no fun sometimes _

Yes, pardon me for not wanting to have to worry about other people embarrassing me the first time I see the guy when he's not hooked up to an IV!

I would never embarrass you Jack! That's you're job and you do quite well without my help.

â€|_..._

Oh don't worry, I'm sure you'll be fine tomorrow, let me know if you need anything alright?

Yeah yeah, thanks man

Of course, and I am happy for you Jack, hope everything goes well!

Thanks, Aster just pulled up and I'm sure he's going to be grilling me all the way home. I'll text you later.

Jack slipped his phone into his pocket as Aster's Jeep pulled up to the curb outside the hospital, its horn sounding an unnecessary double tap as Jack walked around to the passenger door.

"S'how was yer day Jackie?" Aster asked as Jack hopped into the set

and buckled up.

"Great." Jack said earnestly as he leaned back into the seat, a broad grin spreading across his face as his mind went back to his day, more specifically the last few minutes.

Aster looked at Jack suspiciously for a moment before shifting the Jeep into drive and pulling away from the curb, turning toward their house. Several minutes passed in silence before Aster said, quit conversationally "So I take it 'e said yes then?"

Jack blinked looking from the window he'd been staring out of toward his brother "How the hell...?"

"Oh come on Jackie, there'r only two things that get a bloke smile'n like that, and since I doubt the kid was in any shape fer the first I assume ya got yerself a date."

Jack blinked again, his cheeks flushed a light red, Aster's comment sending his mind down a particular path before he could reign it in. Knowing it would be useless to try and deny it Jack nodded "Alright yeah, he said yes." He couldn't quite stop the last bit from coming out like an exultation, his mouth curving into another smile.

"Good on ya Jackie," Aster said with a grin "So when's the big day?"

"You make it sound like we're getting married."

"One step at a time Jackie." Aster said with a wink.

Jack rolled his eyes "Were going out tomorrow, he gets released from the hospital tomorrow so it's kinda a combination date celebration thing."

"Watcha plannin?"

"We're going to see a movie, figured I'd keep it simple for a first date."

"Oh Jack," Aster shook his head in mock disappointment "no originality, I thought I taught you better."

"If I used what you taught me he'd probably have called the cops."

"Hardy har har. Alright so movie, anythin else?"

"I'm debating on bringing him to Sweet Dreams after for a treat." Jack said after a moment's hesitation, he watched Aster's reaction from the corner of his eyes.

"Not a bad idea, make it a little less generic 'n introduce 'im to Sandy at the same time."

"Yeah, just not sure if I want to risk him meeting any of the psychos in my life just yet." Jack said, his voice mostly kidding.

"Well 'es gonna be meetn' me, how much worse can it get from that?" Aster said with a chuckle that Jack found very unnerving.

"Please don't scare him away, I really like him." Jack asked, his voice light but his gaze serious as he looked at his adoptive brother.

"Don't worry Jackie, 'm just messn' with ya." Aster said with a lighthearted chuckle before smiling at Jack "I really am happy fer yeah Jack, I'd never try'n' mess it up fer ya."

"I know," Jack said with a slightly abashed smile "and thanks." He playfully punched Aster on the shoulder which Aster reciprocated slightly harder than was really necessary. "And if you could not mention this to mom or dad tonight that would be great, I'm really tired and I'd like to just get to sleep when we get home and not answer millions of questions."

"Heh, you got it Jackie." Aster said as he slowed to a stop outside the gatehouse, waving to Phil, and headed up the driveway when the gate opened. "And remember, if ya ever need anythin' just ask." Aster said, giving Jack a genuine smile as he pulled the car into the garage and threw it in park. "Whats wrong?" He asked when he noticed the calculating look Jack was giving him.

"I'm trying to decide if that was meant to be dirty or not." Jack answered with a falsely shrewd look.

"Its whatever you want it to be Jackie." Aster said with a chuckle as he got out of the car and headed to the house. Jack sat in his seat for a moment longer, once again thinking back on the day and he laughed happily as he opened the door, eager to get some rest and even more eager for tomorrow to be his own deep blue Anandi, Jack let out a wistful sigh, the keys to which he knew were hidden away somewhere in his mom's office for now another month and three days. Jack took another moment to lament how very close he had been to finally getting his car back before heading in the house. When he entered the kitchen, kicking his shoes off at the door and tossing them into the nearby closet, he found the room suspiciously crowded. His mother was sitting at the counter chatting animatedly at Pitch, who supplied an occasional 'hmmm' or 'of course', his arms elbow deep in soapy water. From the smell of it he'd made steaks and potatoes for dinner which Jack was disappointed he'd missed, especially after the hospital food. A booming laugh from the table told Jack Nick was probably still finishing his meal.

"Welcome home sweetie." Anna said as Jack walked into the room, swiveling on the stool to face him. "How was your day?"

"It was good, they're releasing Hiccup tomorrow." Jack said, walking over and giving her a quick hug.

"Oh that's wonderful, he's feeling better then?"

"Yeah, he's healing well, and it seems like he's doing better too." Jack said. Throwing his arms rather theatrically he yawned "I'm feeling really tired though, think I'm going to bed early tonight." Jack turned toward the door to the hallway, stopping to give Nick who was indeed finishing his meal a one armed hug goodnight.

"Alright Jack, goodnight then." Anna said, looking a little surprised considering Jack was usually the type to be up until the wee hours of

the morning. "Oh! I almost forgot to ask, do you have any plans for tomorrow Jack?"

Jack stopped, about to turn the doorknob, and tried to word his response so it wasn't actually a lie, but before he could come up with the proper wording Aster, who was now hovering near Pitch, spoke up "Oh, I'd say so! Little Jackie got himself a date!" Jack's eyes widened and he gritted his teeth as he turned to glare at his older brother. Aster just gave him a grin and mouthed something that looked a lot like 'top drawer' before turning to pull some leftovers out of the fridge. Jack only had a moment to glare at him however before his attention was dominated by his mother who had spun around in her stool at Aster's words, swinging around to face Jack like the needle of a compass.

Jack jumped slightly as Nick's voice boomed out from the table, slightly garbled by his mouth full of potato "HA-AH! That's a boy Jack! Is about time to eh?"

"Hey!" Jack said indigently, so what if he'd not been very active on the dating scene, that was his business!

"Oh give him a break dear, it's not been that long." Anna cut in before Jack could say anything else.

"Not that long? I was starting to think we would have grandchildren before Jack had boyfriend!"

"Oh don't be ridiculous dear."

"Yeah dad, ya know Pitch hates kids."

"I do not hate children, I merely find the behavior of most of the ones I come across to be deplorable. No respect for people or their property."

Taking advantage of the sudden influx of conversation to ease open the door to the hallway Jack was a full two thirds home free when his mom's voice cut over the clamor "So Jack, when are you going on this date? And who with?"

Jack signed. So much for slipping past his parents and heading to bed, there was no way his mom was going to let him go without details now. "Hiccup is getting out of the hospital tomorrow and we are going to go see a movie together."

Jack wasn't sure how exactly he had expected his mom to react, but he certainly hadn't seen the look of disappointment coming. "Really Jack? A movie, is that really the best you can do?"

"That's what I said!" Aster interjected, as he attempted to snatch his plate back from Pitch who was putting two of the five stakes he'd grabbed back into the fridge.

"Yes Jack! If you want this boy to come back for second date you have to wow him! Like," Nick made a whistling sound between his teeth and brought clenched fists up before making a popping sound with his lips and throwing his fingers open, all in all in was a passable imitation of a firework. "Movie is more like." Nick waved one finger through the air halfheartedly while making a buzzing sound, tracing a couple

weak circles in the air before letting his hand fall out of sight.
"You see?"

"I'm taking him to Sweet Dreams after the movie." Jack said defensively.

"That's not a bad idea, then you can bring him by the house after." Anna said genuinely.

Jack looked at his mother dumbly "D-do wh-what now?" Jack stammered, still caught on the rather horrifying idea of Hiccup meeting the jumble of clashing personalities that passed for his family. Don't get him wrong, Jack loved his family, but at times they could be a little...intense? Yeah, intense was an accurate and non-insulting enough way to describe the near absolute insanity that was probably ensuing in his house at any given time. Jack planned to spare Hiccup that as long as possible, that is of course if tomorrow went well and they both decided to see each other again which he fervently hoped happened, and he probably had a better chance if he eased hiccup into his family.

"Well we do get to meet him?" Anna half said half asked.

"Not tomorrow! Its our first date, I don't even know if there will be a second, plus don't you think taking him to meet the family on the first date seems kinda...rushing things?"

"Oh but you'll introduce him to Sandy?" His mother said, slouching down in her chair and pouting, actually pouting, like a small child denied a second helping of dessert.

"I promise I will let him meet you at some point in the future of my choosing that my or my not be soon but probably will not be." Jack said with a look that clearly said 'that's the best you're gonna get'.

Staring at him for a long moment Anna finally gave in with a sigh
"Fine, you can hide your date for now. So will you need a ride tomorrow?"

"Oh, uh, I'm not sure actually. We were going to make the actual plans tomorrow so maybe?"

"Alright let me know and I'll get someone to drive you."

"I'll give ya a ride if ya need one Jack." Aster offered from the seat he'd taken at the table next to Nick

"...thanks." jack said cautiously, giving Aster a suspicious look.

"Good, glad that's settled. You have a good time tomorrow and we'll see you in the morning dear." Anna said.

"Night." Jack called over his shoulder, casually fleeing the room before anyone else could comment on tomorrow. Feeling too tired for the stairs Jack took the elevator to the top of the tower and threw himself down the tube that led to his room, popping out near his door. His room was large, like most of the house, a gigantic flat screen TV took up the wall opposite the king sized bed. The wall

opposite Jack was covered in posters of various bands and artists, a large sound system took up on corner along with the door to a walk in closet. The last wall had the tube entrance as well as the door to the houses main hallway and Jack's desk, a small pile of school work sitting next to his computer accusingly. The floor was mostly clear save a couple beanbags and a few days worth of cloths he had yet to bring to the laundry shoot.

As Jack hopped off the lip of the tube and stood up straight a little chirping ball of bright green and purple dove at him from a ceiling. "Hey there Baby." Jack said happily to the small bird now perched on his shoulder, nibbling at the pull-string of his hoodie, "Don't you want to ask me about my date tomorrow too?" The small bird ruffled its feathers, the bright green reminding him of a certain someone. "Well his name is Hiccup and, well he's kinda a dork but in the good way, and he's funny, and he's got the cutest freckles, and his eyes are this gorgeous green and-ouch!" Jack exclaimed as the bird nipped at his exposed ear, ruffling its feathers unhappily "Oh don't worry your green is still prettier." Jack chuckled flopping down onto his bed, the bird fluttering to a perch on his bedside table before hopping to a small nest and settling in. "Goodnight Baby, see you in the morning." Jack gave a quick whistle, the lights in the room winking out as he did so, and curled under his blankets, pulling his pants and hoddie off and tossing them on the floor to join the rest of this weeks discarded clothing. He plugged his phone in to the charger and was about to set it on the nightstand when he had an idea; Jack grinned to himself and he slid the phones unlock bar and started scrolling through his contacts.

The rest of the night passed with a surprising swiftness after Jack and Astrid left. Hiccup called a nurse to bring something to eat around dinner time and spoke with his father on the phone briefly, he was unable to visit as he usually did because he was taking an extra shift at the factory, to Hiccup's somewhat guilty relief, though he doubted if even twenty minutes of awkward silence with his father could ruin the almost giddy mood that had settled over him. He was just about to lay down and try to sleep, the nurses having already turned his lights out, when a buzzing sound emanated from somewhere in his sheets. It took him a minute to locate the old flip phone within the folds of his blankets but eventually he found it about to fall over the edge of the bed. Hiccup flipped it open to find he had one new message from 'Jack :)' a smile started creeping across his face as he hit the accept button. _Hey, just wanted to say goodnight and I'm looking forward to tomorrow:)_ Hiccup was profoundly glad nobody else was around because he could only imagine how stupid he looked with the huge grin stretching across his face. Hitting the reply button Hiccup tapped out a response T_hanks, I can't wait for tomorrow either like I can't stop grinning, is that weird?_ Hiccup looked at the text and frowned. "Yes, yes it is weird" he decided and held down the delete button until the offending message was gone. _Thanks, goodnight._ "Wow Hiccup, might as well not even send a text at that point." Once again delete the miniscule response Hiccup tried again. _Thanks for the text, it got me grinning like an idiot because I think you're really awesome not to mention very attractive and I can't imagine why you want to see a movie with me but I really hope tomorrow goes well because I really like you._ Hiccup stared at the text thoughtfully "Its missing something...ah!" _Will you marry me?_ "There, the perfect mixture of desperate and crazy..." Hiccup burred his face in his hands in exasperation "Why is this so hard, like, it should not be this hard to write a text." Hiccup closed his phone

with a self deprecating laugh and thought for a moment before flipping it open again and trying one last time _Thank you :) me too._ And quickly hit send before he could find something wrong with this one.

Hiccup settled more comfortably into his sheets and tucked his phone under his pillow, withdrawing it a moment later as it buzzed again. _:) I'll text when I'm heading over tomorrow then, make sure you're awake and decent ;P_ Hiccup couldn't help the blush that colored his cheeks as he read Jack's text, even as a small laugh escaped his lips. _Alright, see you tomorrow Jack._ Once again settling in Hiccup was less surprised when his phone buzzed again _Cant wait :)_ Smiling to himself Hiccup tucked his phone away for a third time and after several minutes of silence he was snoring quietly.

6. Chapter 6

****Holly crap is has been way to long since I posted chapter 5! Life and school have just been draining me completely dry recently and I've had so little free time to write that it hurts! Sorry for the weight on this, only have a couple weeks of school left so I don't think I'll be putting anything out during those, but then its like a two month winter break! Can't wait to have free time again! Anywho, enjoy! ^^****

Hiccup awoke with a jolt the next morning, his chest heaving, heart threatening to beat right out of his chest, his face, neck, and back covered in sweat, thin streams of wetness trailing from the corners of his eyes down his cheeks. He breathed heavily and lay his head back down, fighting the urge to cry as the old familiar nightmare played through his head, still painfully vivid before his mind's eye. It had been four days since he'd had that nightmare, which was three and a half days longer than his last respite, a small part of him had actually dared to hope the nightmare had finally decided to stop tormenting him...what a wonderful pipe-dream that had been. Sunlight was just starting to trickle into Hiccup's room as he lay there, focusing on controlling his breathing and keeping his eyes wide open until he couldn't feel his pulse in his eyes anymore.

Bringing his hands up to run his palms against his eyes, his right arm giving a small twinge in protest, Hiccup shifted into a sitting position with his knees pulled up to his chest, knowing there was no point in even trying to get any more sleep. Resigned, he settled in for what was sure to be a very long morning more than likely interspersed with depressing thoughts, all to the wonderful undertone of the dull pain from his arm which was throbbing with a renewed vigor. It was just under an hour later that Hiccup's phone interrupted the dark thoughts flowing unwittingly through his mind with a low buzz. Flipping his phone open Hiccup was expecting to see Astrid's name, after all his dad couldn't text and there wasn't anyone else who even had his number, so he started when he saw "Jack :)" on the screen. He stared at the tiny screen for a solid two seconds before he realized what he was looking at, the nightmare having pushed everything out of his mind, the corners of his mouth pulling up ever so slightly as memories of the previous night came flooding back.

His mood increased a little bit Hiccup flipped open his phone. _Hey, I hope this doesn't wake you._

Shaking his head Hiccup responded _And if it had?_

Jack: _Well I knew you were up so there's no way it could have._

Hiccup: _Oh? And how did you know?_

Jack:_ I knew_

Hiccup: _Right, you weren't just lucky._

Jack: _Nope, totally not luck._

Hiccup: _Mmmhm, so then why did you hope it didn't wake me?_

Jack:_._.so any idea what movie you wantcatch?_

Hiccup snorted as he read Jack's response, his chest giving a little flip as Jack's mention of the movie, the movie that they would be seeing during their date that day...he actually had a _date_! Hiccup still had a difficult time wrapping his mind around the concept that he was actually going on a date that wouldn't be interrupted halfway through by his alarm-clock. After all, not long after the realization that he did indeed liked cock came the resignation that he probably wouldn't be getting any until he was well away from his highly opinionated father. That particular wording had originally been Astrid's but Hiccup found there was a certain bluntness to it that he was rather fond of. He personally hadn't expected to even begin to wade into the dating world until he was safely away at college, and even then he hadn't expected much, after all he didn't really advertise his inclinations, didn't have a lisp (and thank god for that because he father may not have been the most observant person on the planet but that certainly would have earned him some suspicion at the very least), he didn't dress particularly noticeably, sure he talked with his hands but so did a lot of people. All and all there wasn't much to tell perspective dates that he was might be interested, not that he expected many interested suitors, but he'd figured (or more accurately, hoped) that small skinny and awkward must have been _someones_ type.

It was actually the almost complete lack of signs (other than the occasional internet search late at night when his parents were dead asleep and the subsequent fantasies, but he'd managed to pass that off to himself as "normal curiosity" for nearly three years) that had made it so hard for him to finally accept that yeah he really was gay. Of course Jack didn't really exude gayness either, which would certainly be a blessing if this date lead to another, which Hiccup fervently hoped it did. His mind now heading down that path Hiccup wondered if Jack would want to take him clubbing sometime? Hiccup liked music as much as the next guy, but large crowds and flashing lights weren't really his idea of a good time, plus he didn't really want to risk having to explain to his father why exactly he'd been caught sneaking into a club. Hiccup was rather glad actually that Jack had chosen something as simple and tame as a movie for tonight, he wasn't sure he was ready for much more just yet.

Hiccup shook his head as he realized his mind had been wandering and looked back at his phone and reread Jack's text before responding.

_I'm not sure, don't really have any clue whats playing right now.
_There was a moment's wait and then his phone buzzed again, the message opening to reveal a screen shot of the local theater's showtimes which he skimmed through, ignoring the horror tittles because no thank you, and after finding nothing that interested him, settled on a rather generic action movie that promised little more than a musclebound hero (always a bonus) foiling a stereotypical villain's even more stereotypical evil plan interspersed with pitiful attempts at character development all packaged in an excessive amount of explosions and gunfire.

Hiccup: _Mission Unlikely llsounds alright. _

Jack: _Really? Not gonna lie, I'm kinda judging you right now.

_

Hiccup: _Don't judge me! I said 'alright', not much out right now._

Jack: _What about Creepy Happenings 6?_

Hiccup: _Ugh, no thank you._

Jack: _Why Ugh? I heard it got really good reviews._

Hiccup:_ Cause...horror movies kinda freak me out..._

Jack: _Awwwww_

Hiccup: _Hey! Don't patronize me!_

Jack: _That wasn't a patronizing awww, that was a "your cute" awwwww_

Hiccup felt his cheeks burn red even as his chest gave a little happy flutter at Jack's comment and he once again had to take a moment to believe what was happening before responding. _I'll take that as a compliment_

Jack: _Good, because it was meant as one ^.^ you are ARE cute_

_Hiccup: Whatever you say crazyman _

Jack: lol, and why am I crazy?

Hiccup was about to reply that anybody who thought he was cute must have been crazy when a sharp knock on the door caught his attention. A moment later the door opened and Hiccup's nurse walked in accompanied by, much to Hiccup's shock, his father.

"Oh good, you're already up then." She said in the usual voice that had somehow become less annoyingly happy during Hiccup's visit, maybe it was the change in his mood that made her perky tones more bearable, or maybe he was just building up a resistance. Either way, the nurse bobbed around the room disconnecting Hiccup from the various tubes and wires that had been attached to his arms all the while talking animatedly about how happy Hiccup must be to be going home and how he would be back to normal in no time. Hiccup payed little attention to her, his gaze focused on his father, who he

hadn't expected to see until that evening at the earliest. "There we go sweetie, you're all unhooked, they already taught you how to do your bandage yesterday and your dad sighed you out, so you're free to go."

"Uh, thanks." Hiccup said somewhat awkwardly as he pushed himself toward the edge of his bed, throwing his legs over the edge and getting shakily to his feet. It had been nearly a week since Hiccup had walked more than the three feet from his bed to his bathroom, and he'd never exactly been the most coordinated person to start with, so it wasn't much of a surprise when his foot caught on a sheet that had trailed to the ground when he stood and pitched forward, heading straight for one of the small tables set against the wall. The anticipated impact never came as a large hand closed around Hiccup's shoulder, steadying him.

"You alright Hiccup?" Stoick said, his voice concerned as he made sure Hiccup was steady before lifting his hand.

"Yeah, I'm fine dad." Hiccup said as he reestablished his precarious sense of balance.

"Don't push yourself son."

"I won't, really dad I'm fine, falling over isn't exactly a new thing for me." Hiccup said as he moved in the general direction of the door, hands out to steady himself as his legs slowly remembered how they worked.

Checkout was pretty simply, his dad having already filled out the paperwork to sign him out, Hiccup just had to listen to a rerun about how to change his bandages and schedule several follow up appointments and before he knew it he was sitting silently in the passenger seat of his father's truck. Hiccup had been taken by such surprise by his sudden release that he completely forgot about the conversation he'd been in the middle of until his phone buzzed, the sound unusually loud in the silence of the truck.

Jack: _well fine, maybe I'll go talk to the lamppost then, as least she answers me!_ Hiccup couldn't help a little snort as he read the text, which earned him a sideways glance from Stoick. Worry suddenly settling in the bit of his stomach Hiccup typed a quick response.

Hiccup: _Sorry, my dad came to bring me home just now. _

"Astrid?" Stoick asked, gesturing to Hiccup's phone.

Hiccup hesitated for a split second before answering "...yeah. Just let her know that I was heading home."

"Ah. Well actually were not heading straight home. I thought, since its still early, we could stop at Lohikäärmeen's for breakfast. If you feel up to it?"

"Uh, yeah, sure." Hiccup answered, surprised by the suggestion. Lohikäärmeen's had been Hiccup's favorite restaurant ever since he was young, but neither he nor his father had gone back since his mother's death.

"Alright." Stoick said giving Hiccup a smile, which he returned cautiously, and turned the car toward their new destination.

As they drove the phone buzzed again Jack: _ Really? I thought you said he worked today?_

Hiccup: _ He usually does. I was pretty surprised when he showed up.
_

Jack: _Oh...so are you busy tonight then, or...?_

Hiccup felt his stomach drop slightly, suddenly worried that Jack might think he was trying to blow him off, which certainly not the case.

"Hey dad?"

"Ya?" Stoick glanced to at Hiccup quickly before returning his eyes to the road.

"Would it be alright if I went to the movies this evening?" Hiccup stared out the window as he asked, knowing the request would sound odd at the very least. There were several seconds of silence before Hiccup glanced back toward his father to find him starring with a raised eyebrow. Not that Hiccup could blame him, it had been nearly a year since he'd gone to the movies and even before that he was never much a movie goer. Combining that with everything that had taken place over the last week and, well, it didn't exactly create a 'going to the movies with friends' kind of mood. Not wanting any questions Hiccup quickly amended "Its kind of as like a...celebration for going home thing, with...Astrid."

Stocik's expression cleared quickly and shifted to a smile that Hiccup would almost call excited. "Oh, of course you can go." Hiccup was surprised by the enthusiasm with which his father gave his consent, until he spoke again. "Its good to see you out with friends again." Hiccup nodded, unable to speak over the sudden lump of guilt that had grown in his throat as he thought about blatantly lying to his father. Not wanting too think about that any more Hiccup pulled his phone out and tapped a quick response to Jack.

Hiccup: _Were still good for tonight, looks like we'll have to hit the 7:45 showing._

Jack: _ Awesome :D I can't wait! I'll pick you up at 7:15 then, give us plenty of time to get to the movie?_

Hiccup: _Sounds good :) Don't know If I'll be able to text for a while, I'm stating to get that 'father son talk' vibe. _

Jack: _Well have fun with that :P, I'll se you tonight Hic!_

Hiccup had to fight to keep the smile off his face as he read Jack's responses, but he must have failed at least partially because his father looked over at him as he snapped the phone shut and slipped it in his pocket.

"Astrid say something amusing?"

"Wha-oh, uh, well amusing for Astrid, so, you know, sarcastic and

mean." Hiccup spoke quickly before offering a weak smile. Thankfully that seemed to satisfy his father and the rest of the short drive passed in an only slightly awkward silence.

As they pulled into the parking lot Hiccup started feeling a strange mixture of emotions. The sight of the rather small building, sided with weathered wood planks fit together to resemble the hull of a boat stirred a reflexive scene of excitement, the feeling that he was accustomed to when visiting Lohikäärme's. Along side the excitement was the irrepressible feeling that something was missing, and Hiccup was painfully aware of exactly what that something was. Hiccup did his best not to think about that as he got out of the car and followed his father to the double doors with porthole windows, up to the bright eyed waitress, not one that Hiccup remembered, waiting at the ship's wheel themed podium, and to a seat at one of the many booth's lining the outer walls of the restaurant. Hiccup attempted to smile back to the waitress as she handed him a menu, though juggling by the slightly concerned look she gave him he hadn't managed more than a grimace.

"Hello, I'm Tracy and I'll be your server today, can I start you out with anything?"

"Water thank you." Stoick said from behind his menu.

"Uh, yeah water for me too please." Hiccup wasn't sure his stomach could handle anything else at the moment. The silence stretched out as both Hiccup and his father stared pointedly at their menus, not meeting each others gaze until Tracy returned with their water.

"Here you two are, now are we ready to order or do you need a minute?"

"I believe we are ready, I'll have the seafarer's breakfast with the bacon, eggs sunny side up and a coffee, black thank you." Stoic said as he handed her his menu.

"You got it, and for you?" Tracy asked, looking over toward Hiccup.

"Uh, I'll have the same as him. Eggs scrambled and a glass of milk." Hiccup doubted he would be able to eat the first bite, but he didn't want to cause an issue before they even started talking.

"Alright," Tracy said as she took Hiccup's menu "I'll go put this in then, shouldn't be too long."

As she walked away Hiccup looked over at his father only to wish that he hadn't. He was sitting there, straight as a board with his large hands folded on the table in front of him, Hiccup only recognized the apprehensive expression on what little of his father's face was not covered by beard because he'd grown up doing so. Sounding like he had to search for every word before saying it, Stoick began to speak.

"Hiccup...I know things have been...hard since your mother...but...why didn't you tell how bad before...before this...incident?"

Hiccup's thoughts flashed with several possible answers. 'Why didn't I tell you? Oh, I don't know, maybe if we spoke more then every

couple days in the last few months, maybe if you weren't working seven days a week, maybe if you actually bothered to try and talk to me..." Hiccup let his angry feelings fade away, knowing they wouldn't do him any good at this point. Unable to find an answer he just shrugged.

His brow creasing in a frown Stoick leaned forward toward Hiccup "Hiccup, I can't help you if you don't tell me whats doing on. I know...I know I'm not the easiest person to speak to. If you don't want to talk to me would you feel better talking to someone else...a professional?

"I'm not going to talk to some shrink." Hiccup said flatly, he wasn't exactly surprised by the course this conversation had taken so far and he'd already decided that he didn't want to have some stranger try and tell him to get over things and explore 'how that makes him feel', no thank you.

"It could be helpful Hiccup, talking about these things-" Stoick continued, his voice earnest as he tried to sell Hiccup on the idea of seeing a therapist.

"I said no." Hiccup cut him off, his voice just as flat as before. "I'm not crazy."

"There are people who would disagree with you." Stoick snapped before seeming to catch himself. "I don't know how you expect me to deal with this then Hiccup, you won't talk to me and you refuse to talk to anyone else. I can't help if I don't know anything is wrong." Stoick clenched his fists and let out a deep breath before continuing one. "How do you propose I deal with this?" The questions seemed only partially rhetorical and Hiccup couldn't stop himself from answering.

"I don't suppose 'just pretend it didn't happen' is an option?" He said dryly.

"So what, you want me to just sit around like everything is fine until you...until you have another...incident?"

"You mean until I try to kill myself again?" Hiccup had meant his words to hurt his father, he himself was a little hurt at his father's apparent refusal to acknowledge what had actually happened. He was not expecting for his father to physically flinch, like Hiccup, or more accurately someone much larger than Hiccup, had hit him. Hiccup could not remember ever seeing his father react like that too anything before, he looked almost scared for the briefest moment as he looked back at Hiccup. Before Hiccup could completely process the scene it was over and Stoick was once again looking at him with a stern expression.

"Yes." Stoick said, his voice even deeper than usual. Looking closer at his Father Hiccup wasn't sure if he was imagining the harder than usual set of his jaw or the slightly harder than normal breathing as they sat staring at each other for several long moments before something seemed to snap in Stoick and he deflated ever so slightly. "I know that I am not the most approachable person, and I've been even worse since...since your mother's death but...please Hiccup if you need to talk about something, about you, or school, or your friends or...or your mother, or _anything, _talk to me. I'm your

father and I'll be here for you." Having finished speaking Stoick looked suddenly very self conscious as he waited for Hiccup's reply.

Hiccup found that he suddenly had difficulty speaking past a lump in his throat, surprised by the sudden rush of emotions he was feeling. Swallowing hard he spoke quietly "I...I can do that I think."

"You promise?"

"...Promise."

His face relaxing into a smile small Stoick reached across the table and clapped Hiccup on the shoulder "I love you son."

Hiccup started ever so slightly, surprised to hear his father, never one to openly express any sort of emotion, actually say that.

"I love you too Dad."

The rest of the meal went remarkably well by Hiccup's usual standards for time with father, and even by just time spent in general. They talked casually, if a little awkwardly, Hiccup telling his dad about what little he'd bothered to pay attention to in school the last week he's attended, and lamented how much work he would have to make up which drew a small laugh from Hiccup and a cautious smile from Stoick. Stoick told Hiccup how he'd traded shifts with someone on the evening shift so he could pick him up early today, which meant he would be leaving for work at six that evening, a fact that Hiccup was guiltily relieved to hear, he'd worried what he would say tell his father when a car that clearly wasn't Astrid's showed up for him. After breakfast they made their way home, Tracy waving them a cheerful goodbye which they both returned, Hiccup with his good arm. Hiccup was feeling pleasantly full after eating far more than he would have guessed he'd be capable of after a talk with his father, but then the talk had gone far better than he had expected. Combine that with the fact he was going home finally, and his plans for later that evening and today was looking like it would be pretty great.

Hiccup felt a sense of excitement growing in him as they pulled onto their street, which surprised him slightly after all he was just going back to the same house they'd lived in for years. Still he found himself waiting impatiently as his father retrieved his bag from the car and unlocked the door to the small one story house. Hiccup took nearly three whole steps into the house before a large black blur launched itself off the back of the couch, resolving itself into the shape of a large black cat which Hiccup just managed to catch with his good arm.

"I missed you too buddy." Hiccup said to the cat, which was purring nearly loud enough to drown up the freckled teen's words, as he made his way to the couch and sat down in order to hold the cat more easily. "Toothless!" Hiccup exclaimed with a slight laugh as, the moment he was seated, the large cat pressed himself flush with Hiccup's chest before turning around and running his other flank him. The cat froze there for a moment before going to nose at the bandages on Hiccup's arm which the brunette lifted away from the feline quickly. No quickly enough however, as when green eyes met emerald Hiccup could, as crazy as it sounded, practically feel the accusation

boring into him. He'd long since grown custom to the sometimes off-puttingly intelligent actions of his cat, but never before had they made him so self conscious. Hiccup grabbed the remote and turning on the TV, flipping to some documentary about the ocean. He proceeded to spend the next several hours petting Toothless and trying to keep his thoughts in more pleasant places, at task that proved harder then he would have hoped but easier then he feared. He must have fallen asleep because Stoick woke him at six on his way to work with an only slightly awkward hug. His father's departed having snapped Hiccup back to the world of the waking, the brunette teen suddenly realized that it had been nearly a week since his last shower, and he'd spent most of the day asleep, and he had a date in little over an hour. It helped slightly that Jack had seen him just the previous day in his disheveled state, but still one should at least try and look good for a date, and Hiccup had a lot of work to do it he wanted to look presentable.

7. Chapter 7

****Hey everybody, so I've a bit of an update on me, and my writing. First off I'm so sorry about how long this chapter has taken to get released. I've been incredibly busy with school as of late. I'm taking three 300 level English courses and one 400 level, all focused on writing and it's a big workload. I'm writing a lot right now, which sadly leaves me with very little time to write anything for myself, and usually not much motivation when I do have free time. This week is my spring break and I've only got two projects to finish so I'm hoping to get at least one more thing out before classes start back up in earnest, but no promises. I can promise that once school is out for the summer I'll be posting stuff a lot more (not that that would be particularly hard --). So anyway sorry for the wait and thanks for all the encouragement to find what little time I could to work in this! I love you all! ^^^****

Hiccup moved around the house quickly, a combination of excitement and nerves adding a bit a speed to his stride as he prepared to undertake the daunting task of making himself look good in under an hour. Garbing a clean change of clothes Hiccup made his way to the bathroom and, upon catching sight of his reflection in the mirror decided that 'presentable' was probably a more reasonable goal at the moment. Having no time to waste Hiccup quickly stripped off his cloths and stepped into the shower, adjusting the water and standing near the back out of the stream until it had warmed up. When he finally managed to find that sweet spot between molten magma and arctic circle he stepped forward and let out a huge sigh as the warm water washed over his shoulders and down the rest of him, he could practically feel tension flowing off him alongside the soothing water. He stood there for several minutes with his eyes closed, just soaking in the rejuvenating warmth of the shower until he was quite sure he would fall asleep right there if he didn't start moving. Moving quickly Hiccup cleaned himself, doing his best to pay no more attention to the angry lines carved into his right arm then absolutely necessary, still he couldn't help wincing as he saw where his flesh had been stitched back together. That finished, Hiccup made sure to double check he'd rinsed all the soap from his hair and quickly stepped out to dry himself, wrapping his arm in a fresh bandage like the nurse had shown him.

Some time later Hiccup was standing in front of the large mirror that

hung on the wall next to his front door, thinking that he'd at least managed to push himself out of the 'total mess' category. He'd dressed in one of this nicer pairs of dark jeans and a green button down shirt, grateful that the cooling weather justified the long sleeves that conveniently hid his bandages. He'd even made an attempt at doing something with his hair, other than his usual 'let it hang where it may' style, and lost precious time trying to repair the results of that disaster. Still, he now found himself examining his reflexion by the front door, he totally wasn't waiting at the front door like some lovestruck schoolgirl that's for sure, with a solid two minutes to spare. As he looked out the front window Hiccup could feel apprehension settle in his stomach. He took a deep breath and held it for a second before letting it out through his nose. "Alright Hiccup, don't be nervous. Tonight is going to go fine, you won't do anything stupid and you certainly aren't going to make a complete fool of yourself. Just relax." His little pep talk helped and he felt his nerves settle just a bit, at least until a Jeep pulled up in front of his house and a shock of white hair emerged from the back seat, followed quickly by the rest of the reason for Hiccup's nerves. He closed his eyes and took another breath, trying to calm his stomach which had apparently decided to skip the butterflies and instead felt like it contained several large birds who were none to happy about their captivity. His arm throbbed dully as he clenched his fists before letting the breath out. _Why am I even so nervous about this? Its not like I'm going out with a stranger, its Jack! Granted I've actually known him for less then a week so he might as well be a stranger, but he doesn't feel like one that's for sure and maybe it would be better if it was a stranger. At least then I wouldn't have to worry about running a date and a friendship in one fell swoop, maybe this wasn't the best idea after all, maybe I can come up with some reason to call this off before it has a chance to go terribly wro-_

knock knock knock knock knock...knock knock

Hiccups train of thought was cut off by a sharp rapping at the door which Hiccup opened almost immediately, revealing a surprised Jack who had clearly not expected such a quick response.

"Hey Hiccup." Jack said, a wide grin appearing on his face the moment the door had opened.

"Hi Jack." Hiccup replied sheepishly, wondering just how obvious it was that he'd been waiting at the door. If Jack had guessed however he made no mention of it, to busy looking Hiccup up and down.

"Wow, you look really good." Jack said through his own sheepish grin "uh, not that I'm surprised or anything, I mean I'm was sure you would, not to say that you didn't before and-" Jack backpedaled before stopping himself and looking right at Hiccup with only a teeny bit of embarrassment "You look good."

Hiccup laughed quietly, one hand over his mouth as he tried not to insult Jack by laughing outright. "Thank you, granted the last time you saw me I was in a hospital gown going on a week without so much as a breath-mint, kinds hard to do worse than that."

"Oh I don't know, I think you pulled it off pretty well."

"You can actually say that with a straight face."

The pair of them laughed and Hiccup felt his nerves settle a bit as they fell into easy conversation. Hiccup took the moment to examine Jack "You look pretty good yourself." It was an understatement. Jack had forgone his usual hoodie in favor of a dark blue short sleeve button down shirt worn over a white undershirt and a pair of dark jeans. Hiccup could think of several verbs more fitting then "good" to describe the boy before him but his sense of prudence kept him from voicing them.

A slight blush colored Jack's cheek and he glanced away from Hiccup for a moment "Glad you think so." They both stood there for a minute longer, smiling at one another, before a sharp honk jarred them from their daze. "That would be my brother," Jack's voice held a bit of annoyance as he spoke, gesturing his arm toward the Jeep "after you sir."

Hiccup stepped out of the house and turned to lock the door, another honk sounding as the lock clicked and he turned back toward Jack to find what he was pretty sure was the tail end of Jack aiming a rather rude gesture at the Jeep. His suspicions were confirmed a moment later when an arm extended from the drivers side window for a moment, middle finger displayed prominently, before vanishing again. Jack ran a hand down his face before trying to face Hiccup directly again.

"Come on, lets get going before he gets bored and decides it would be funny to moon us." Jack said, turning half way toward the car and stopping, waiting for Hiccup to join him. Hiccup's laughter turned a little uncertain as he looked at Jack and couldn't tell if the other teen was joking or not. Deciding it was best not to chance it as something like that might be just the type of thing a neighbor might mention to his father, Hiccup hurried after Jack. "After you." Jack held open Hiccups door for him.

"Well how gentlemanly of you." Hiccup's voice was a little less sarcastic then he had intended as he slid into the Jeep, returning the quick smile Jack gave him before the door closed behind him.

The Jeep was upholstered in what Jack was pretty sure was dark leather, though he couldn't be sure having no comparison to call on; the inside of the car a bit warmer then he would have preferred but then he'd always been more comfortable in cooler weather, a trait his father had always attributed to his Norwegian ancestry.

"Hello there, I'm Aster 'n, unless ya just decided ta climb into my car on a whim, I assume yer Hiccup?" Hiccup had to strain his eyes to see in the relative darkness of the Jeep as a surprisingly small amount of light filtered in through the windows from the streetlights outside.

"Yeah, you Jack's brother right?" Hiccup asked as he shook the hand that was offered him, the grip stronger then he'd expected but still nothing compared to his father's. As his eyes adjusted and the figure beyond the hand came into focus Hiccup had to wonder if the members of Jack's family had to work at their appearance, or if they were just blessed by default.

"Mentioned me did he?"

"A couple times yeah, only good things."

"Psh, yeah I'm sure."

Jack climbed into the Jeep at that moment, "Hiccup, this is my older brother Aster, Aster this is Hiccup."

"Yeah, I was just introduc'in myself to 'im."

"Good, then lets get going, don't wanna be late for the movie." Jack said, buckling himself up.

The drive went quickly, the quiet of the Jeep interrupted by nothing but the low music Aster switched on after several moments of the silence. As they pulled up in front of the theater he turned back to face the two teens "Alright Jack, just text me when yer ready to be picked up and I'll come getcha."

"Thanks, I imagine it will be around ten-ish."

"Alright Jackie. Oh! I almost forgot, I got whatcha asked for." Hiccup looked away from Aster as he turned to rummage in the center console to Jack, who looked confused and a bit wary of what was happening. "Here ya go." Aster handed Jack a small pair of child's safety scissors with the rounded tip like the ones they'd been given in elementary school so they didn't hurt themselves, which he looked at with a cocked eyebrow. "Figured these would fit in a pocket better than mom's sew'n scissors, though now that I think about it 'm not sure if these'll do much to a popcorn tub. That cardboard it pretty tough, specially on the bottom." It took Hiccup a moment to understand what was being said, and he would have blushed if comprehension hadn't dawned on Jack at that moment, his expression shifted and he looked like he might use the scissors to stab his brother, who was cackling, unashamed. He ducked as Jack settled on whipping them at his head and practically throwing himself from the vehicle, which Hiccup took as a cue that he should leave as well. "Have fun you two, and be careful of the popcorn Hiccup!" Aster shouted out the window as the teens turned toward the theater door, laughing again as he pulled away.

"Ok I swear I had nothing to do with that." Jack said as soon as the Jeep was gone.

"Your brother's kind of an ass huh?"

"You have no idea. I suppose I got off easy all things considered, I half expected baby pictures in the bath-tub when he volunteered to be chauffeur."

Hiccup chuckled "Why do parents even take pictures like that?"

"Future blackmail. Has to be."

"You think?"

"Well do you have any better explanation?" Jack turned to the teller "Two for Mission Unlikely Eleven." He looked at Hiccup as he said the tittle, poring as much derision as he could muster into the words.

"Oh screw you."

"We'll see, depends on how the night goes." Jack winked.

"What are you, five?" Hiccup blushed furiously as he glared at Jack who just laughed as he accepted the tickets and lead Hiccup to the small line to get into the theater proper.

"Hey, I was gonna pay for my ticket." Hiccup said as Jack handed him a ticket the brunette teen having been too distracted to protest at the time of the purchase.

"I don't think so, tonight is on me."

"I'm not letting you spend a bunch of money on me." Hiccup protested.

"I asked you out, I pay for the date, its the law."

"Oh is it now? What law is that?"

"The laws for dating cute guys."

Hiccups retort caught in his chest for a second at Jack's response "You're a dork."

"You say that like its a bad thing!" Jack grinned "Now pick something." Jack gestured at the menu on the concession stand.

"I'm not letting you spend money on me."

"Would you just pick something?"

"Nope." Hiccup said smugly.

"Fine," Jack turned to the cashier "I'll have one of everything."

The young man working the register's look of surprise was nothing compared to Hiccup's look of utter astonishment, his mouth actually dropping open while Jack just looked back at him innocently. "Are you serious?" Jack raised his hands and gave Hiccup a look that answered quite clearly. "You are ridiculous."

"Well, you wouldn't pick something." Jack said as though his reasoning wasn't completely insane.

"Fine!" Hiccup conceded with exasperation and scanned the menu "I'll take a soft pretzel."

The cashier, who had followed the conversation like a tennis match now looked at Jack "One soft pretzel, a large popcorn and two drinks please." He handed the cashier his card and turned to Hiccup "Now was that so hard?" Hiccup rolled his eyes in reply, which earned him another laugh from Jack.

"You know I could have called you're bluff." Hiccup commented as he accepted the pretzel a few minutes later and the pair turned toward their theater.

"What bluff?"

"You wouldn't really have bought one of everything." Jack didn't respond accept a pointed look. "But that would have been like...three hundred some dollars." Hiccup said incredulously, having run through the prices he remembered from the menu and totaled them up.

"Probably." Jack said casually as he held the door to the theater open for Hiccup who walked past the white haired teen, wondering if he really _had _been serious, and if so how a teenager had money like that to blow on movie concessions. The theater was empty as they entered, the movie having been out for some time, and apparently not good enough to continue to draw a crowd even on a Saturday night. "Sweet, best seats in the house are all ours!" Jack exclaimed as he lead Hiccup to the back of the theater, seating them smack-dab in the middle of the row. "I hate getting stuck up close, kills my neck looking up for so long like that." Hiccup nodded as he took a seat next to Jack, still thinking about the earlier conversation.

"Your not, like, a drug dealer or something, are you?" Hiccup didn't remember actually giving his mouth permission to voice what he was thinking, but he was unable to stop the question once it was started, and was left sitting there doing his best to look more casually interested in Jack's answer rather than absolutely mortified at what he'd said.

"_What_?" Jack half laughed "Where the hell did that come from?"

"Well!" Hiccup said, feeling suddenly defensive now that it was clear Jack wasn't offended "What kind of seventeen year old has three-hundred odd dollars to blow one popcorn and Sour Patch Kids?"

"Oh," Jack said when he'd finished laughing "Well I guess its actually my dad's money, not mine." He looked away and rubbed the back of his neck as he spoke.

"Oh...he's not a drug dealer is he?"

"No, hes a businessman." Jack's voice was guarded and Hiccup could tell he wasn't terribly comfortable with this topic of discussion and so he swallowed the rest of his questions and gave Jack a smile.

"Alright, as long as his business doesn't involve _delivering unmarked packages to uptown_." Hiccup said with a passable Italian accent.

"You watch to much crime TV." Jack chuckled, relaxing into his seat.

The talked for a few more minutes about their favorite crime dramas, arguing over who's favorite main character would outsmart the others until the lights of the theater dimmed and the advertisements on the screen faded to darkness.

The movie previews proved to be interesting, both teens discussing

each coming attraction as it played, Hiccup indigently pointing out several errors in the preview of a movie based on a book he'd read, stating that if the preview was that bad the movie was already a lost cause.

As the previews came to an end Jack leaned toward Hiccup, a precaution made unnecessary by the utter lack of other people in the theater, and whispered "Well, best part of the movies over."

"So is hating on your date's movie choice also in those laws of yours?"

"Only if they choose the worst possible movie out at the time."

"You haven't even seen it yet, how could you possibly know its bad?"

"Call it a sixth sense. That and the movies have been getting worse since the first and the last one was truly awful."

The movie started then and they both fell silent, at least for a few minutes. Jack, seemingly unable to restrain himself, leaned over and began to whisper a stream of criticisms of the movie. From the moment where the main villain, complete with eye-patch, appeared on screen 'An eye patch...he's got a freaking eye-patch Hiccup! Why not just shave evil into his chest hair?' to the first major fight scene 'Watch him take out twelve guys with fully automatic sub-machine guns with nothing but his bare hands and the power of awesome.' Things continued in that vein for just over half the movie until Hiccup's stomach decided to rumble rather loudly just as the movie went completely silent. He'd started feeling hungry a bit ago, having eaten the pretzel rather quickly and only then realizing he hadn't eaten anything since that morning, luckily for him until then his stomach had been drowned out by gunfire and dramatic music.

This time it had waited until everyone around would be sure to hear its protest. "Maybe I should have gotten you one of everything." Jack joked, looking at Hiccup.

"I'm fine." Hiccup shifted uncomfortably in his seat, glad the theater was dark so Jack couldn't see the embarrassment tinting his cheeks.

"Here have some-" Jack started, his statement cut off as Hiccup shifted further in his seat, swinging his left leg up to lay in on his right knee. It never made it there however, instead intercepting the popcorn bucket Jack had just been offering to Hiccup, sending it high into the air where it rained down bits of popcorn down on the stunned teens before coming to rest squarely over Jack's head.

Hiccup burst out laughing, doubling over in his seat as Jack joined in a moment later, his laughter muffled slightly by the bucket still covering his head. It was several minutes before they were able to muster enough self control to do more than sit there gasping for breath. Wiping tears from his eyes Hiccup pushed himself up in his seat and removed the bucket from Jack's head, releasing a small shower of popcorn that sent the two into hysterics again. As the pair reigned themselves in for a second time Jack wiped a tear from the corner of his eyes "That was beautiful." He said, voice still on the

edge of bursting into laughter again.

"What are the odds?" Hiccup agreed, just as close to loosing it again himself. Getting a good look at Jack Hiccup nearly did loose it "You are covered in popcorn, how much was even in that thing?"

"Most of it, I wasn't really hungry so I didn't eat much."

"Yeah well now most of its in your hair."

"Great," Jack stood up and bent over, placing his head at Hiccup's level as he started rubbing his hands through his hair to remove the popcorn "give me a hand here."

Hiccup chuckled as he leaned forward and helped Jack pick all the popcorn from his hair. Standing up Jack shook himself, running a hand along his collar and removing pieces caught there before deciding he was relatively popcorn free. "Come on" he held his hand out to Hiccup, pulling him to his feet and brushing off the considerably smaller amount of popcorn from Hiccups person, pulling several pieces from his longer hair. Deeming Hiccup also popcorn free Jack set back down in his seat of brushing it off. Hiccup went to brush his own seat off, however the popcorn under his feet proved slippery then he'd anticipated and suddenly he found himself moving quite rapidly toward the floor behind him. The anticipated impact never came as a pair of arms wrapped around Hiccup's torso, catching him and lowering him gently onto his seat. "Whao, you ok?"

"Fine, thanks." Hiccup said, wondering if the furious blush now coloring his cheeks was from the embarrassment of nearly falling right in front of Jack, or from having his arms warped around him like that. Apparently realizing at that moment he was still holding Hiccup, Jack let him go, sitting up a bit straighter in his own seat as Hiccup felt his chest fall a tiny bit as Jack withdrew.

"Good." Jack replied simply, giving a tiny cough and turning back to the screen where someone we being held hostage by Mr. Eye-patch.

Several minutes passed, another fist fight had broken out on screen so at least the sudden awkwardness wasn't silent. Still Hiccup found himself fidgeting him his seat until he finally lifted the armrest to his right, slightly relived to be able to lean back without the hard plastic digging into his side. He stiffened then when Jack's arm suddenly extended toward him and draped itself across his shoulders. Hiccup took a deep breath and forced himself to relax even as his heart beat faster in his chest and his shoulders seemed unusually sensitive, picking up every minute movement of Jack's arm. Steeling himself Hiccup shifted himself in his seat until he was leaning back against Jack, the back of his head leaning against the crook of Jack neck, Jack's arm now wrapping over Hiccups shoulders and draping across his chest. Despite his best efforts Hiccup knew he entire body was tense as he leaned back against Jack, his hypersensitive state having spread from his shoulders through his entire back, detecting every minor shift in Jack's position. His eyes darted around the empty theater, assuring that is was actually empty. It felt nice leaning against Jack like this, feeling the other boy pressed against him, it felt nice and it felt right and Hiccup very much wanted it to continue. Still, his stomach was twisting itself in knots, a sharp contrast to the general feeling of warmth that had blossomed in his

chest, everything he'd been told growing up, everything he'd been told about right and wrong and every offhanded comment about 'those queers' his father had ever said crashed around in his head. His brain was at war with itself, his knee-jerk reaction of how very wrong this situation should have been fighting against both his logical mind, he'd accepted this about himself months ago after all, and against the feelings currently racing through his teenage frame.

"Hiccup?" Jack voice cut into Hiccup's racing thoughts.

"Huh?" Hiccup leaned back to look up at Jack.

"I was commenting on how Mr. Biceps there had no issue shooting that tiny button just now but couldn't hit someone ten feet away from him earlier. Really Hiccup, my witty cometary doesn't do nearly as much good if there's nobody to appreciate it."

Hiccup smiled, and was about to remark how nobody had been appreciating it the entire movie, when he noticed just how very close Jack face was to his own in this position, his face only a couple inches away, his lips only a couple inches away. His stomach started to squirm again but for a reason entirely different then before, his tongue darted out to wet his lips as they just stared at each other. Hiccup couldn't tell if it was Jack who was moving closer to him or his own body acting without his permission, but suddenly Jack's face was drifting closer to his until only two inches separated them...one inch...half and inch, the movie had fallen silent in the background, or Hiccup just couldn't hear it anymore as his eyes began to drift slowly shut.

"_AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!" _The two teens jumped violently as a woman's bloodcurdling scream broke the silence of the theater, and the hero immediately set off to rescue her. Jack had jerked upright at the noise, Hiccup jumping away from Jack at the same time. The looked at each-other, both laughing nervously.

"Well, that certainly got my pulse going." Jack laughed, most of his usual joking air back in his words. Hiccup wondered weather he meant the scream or the almost kiss, because while Hiccup didn't have much experience with the whole dating thing, he was pretty sure they'd nearly kissed just now. Looking back at the screen Hiccup saw the villain monologueing about being able to catch anything with the right bait and Hiccup found himself rather annoyed at that moment with both the villain and his stupid eyepatch for not just killing the woman and getting it over with instead of letting her scream for help.

"Oh yes, let him get close enough to disarm you, not like you have a gun or anything." The casualness of Jack's comment was obviously forced, the air between them thick with an awkwardness that Hiccup wasn't used to between them. They continued watching the movie for some time, neither taking their eyes off the screen as the tension slowly seeped out of the situation and Hiccup felt himself relax back into his seat. Hiccup started when he felt a hand slide over his own, resting on top of it for a moment before angling to weave thin fingers between his own; Hiccup smiled as he squeezed Jack's hand and got a light squeeze in return. The remainder of the movie passed quickly, only the occasional complaint from Jack breaking the comfortable silence.

As the end credits began to roll stood, sliding his hand from Jack's, and gathered his coat.

"You don't wanna stay for the credits? What if they do one of those mini scenes at the end?" Jack ask, still in his seat.

"Then all the worlds oceans couldn't possibly hold the tears I would shed for having missed it. Lets go." Hiccup walked past Jack and stopped on his other side, patting his pocked to be sure his phone was still there.

"Hey you picked this movie, I told you it would be bad."

"Yeah well, I thought I'd give it the benefit of the doubt."

"And how'd that work out for you?"'

"Terribly."

"Aww, you didn't enjoy yourself?" Jack pouted as they made there way out of the theater.

"I didn't say that."

"The company make up for the terrible movie?"
>Jack grinned.<p>

"Mostly, except for this one annoying guy who was sitting by me, wouldn't shut up the whole movie."

"You wound me good sir!" Jack stopped walking, placing a hand on his chest and looking affronted.

"I speak only the truth." Hiccup responded before getting more serious "So where are we going exactly?" He'd pretty much been following after Jack as the pale teen led him down the mostly empty streets outside the theater, however they'd walked down three blocks now and Jack gave no indication where they were going."

"Its a surprise." Winking before turning to lead Hiccup down a narrow ally.

"Hiccup looked down the alleyway suspiciously "Aren't I supposed to be drugged for supprises like this?"

"Oh haha, just come one, this is a shortcut." Jack walked back to Hiccup and, grabbing his hand, half led and half dragged him down the alleyway. Maybe it was the concealment offered by the darkness, or maybe it was his half expectation that someone with a knife was gonna jump out from behind every pile of trash in the ally, but Hiccup found himself sticking very close to Jack, their shoulders constantly rubbing as they traversed the dark passage. Soon they were back on a main street, streetlamps seeming glaringly bright after the darkness of the ally.

"So you gonna tell me where were going yet?" Hiccup asked as he let go of Jack hand.

Taking a step ahead of the brunet Jack turned around to face Hiccup,

walking backwards as he spoke. "You don't understand the concept of a surprise, do you?"

"Oh fine!" Hiccup sighed "Can you at least tell me if were close?"

"Yeah were close, couple more blocks."

"Ok." Things fell silent as the duo walked down another block past dark storefronts. They were walking down the town old main street that had died decades ago when the chain stores had first shown up in the area.

"So you glad to be home?" The suddenness of the question had Hiccup looking at Jack cautiously. Seeming to since Hiccup's apprehension Jack continued "I mean it must be better then being stuck in a bad all day."

"I guess, though I kinda spend most of the day sleeping anyway." Hiccup said sheepishly.

"Your were probably tired moving around as much as you did after just sitting there for a week. I know it took me a couple days to get back into the whole 'moving' thing after the last time I was there."

"And when was that?"

"bout a year ago, broke my arm in six places."

"How did you manage to do that?"

"â€¦I fell out of a tree?" Jack looked away as he spoke.

Hiccup laughed, more at Jack's expression then at the admission though it was rather amusing to imagine swinging from the top of a tree, "Of course you did. Why were you climbing a tree anyway?"

"Were here." Jack stopped and swept his hand at the store to their right. Turning to examine it Hiccup saw the storefront was mostly covered by various fliers and posters, the only indication of what lay beyond was a small sign handing just above a neon 'open' sign.

"Sweet Dreams?" Hiccup cocked his head as he looked at Jack, he'd lived here for most his life and he'd never heard of the place before.

"Yep, after you monsieur." Jack opened the door and bowed to Hiccup as he held it open.

"Well thank you." Hiccup walked through the door and blinked, shocked at the contrast between the shabby exterior of the shop and the interior, which Hiccup could only describe as shimmering. The entire shop was decorated in a golden motif that shimmered like glitter at the bright lights handing from the ceiling. The far wall was lined with booths, small tables dotting most of the remaining floorspace. The wall nearest the door was blocked off by a glass counter filled with more flavors of ice cream then Hiccup knew existed, the wall behind the counter covered with boxes upon boxes of every kind of

candy than Hiccup had ever seen and hundreds that he'd never even heard of. Sitting on the counter looking so relaxed Hiccup almost thought he was asleep was a young man who had to be near Hiccup's age, his wavy blond hair sticking straight up.

"Hey Sandy!" Jack walked over to the counter and gave the guy one of those hand clasp half-hug things.

Sandy smiled at Jack before leaning to look past Jack's shoulder, his gaze locking onto Hiccup. Looking back at Jack he raised an eyebrow "Yeah, that's him." Sandy nodded in what Hiccup thought, or at least hoped, was an appreciative way. It wasn't until he hopped down off the counter that Hiccup realized just how short the blond was, he just barely reached five feet if you included his spikey hair.

"uh, Hi." Hiccup said, rubbing his elbow self consciously as Sandy examined him. He was quite surprised when Sandy poked at a bracelet he was wearing, a simple black band that matched the rings Hiccup now noticed on each of Sandy's fingers. A monotone voice sounded from the bracelet as he began forming shapes with his hands.

"Hello it is good to meet you at last. Jack has not stopped talking about you for days." Hiccup's mouth was hanging open as he glanced between Sandy who was grinning widely and Jack who was trying to hide his blush. "They are a new computer. They take a lot of practice to use. I am helping to practice them for a shop." Hiccup cocked his head as Sandy gave an exasperated eye roll.

"He's helping to beta test them for a tech company out of Sweden, He doesn't like to use them much cause there in the early stages and don't have all the signs in their database, plus you have to sync each sign to your hands too." Jack's face was back to its usual pale coloration as he spoke. "Come on Sandy, shouldn't you be serving the two customers that just walked in?" Sandy raised his eyebrows and glanced between Hiccup and Jack and gave Jack a look that Hiccup had no idea what to make of. "Sandy..." Jack's voice held a warning tone. Sandy rolled his eyes with a smile before hopping over the counter and starting to grab various spoons and glass containers from under the counter. "After you sir" Jack said as he gestured toward a nearby booth. Grinning, Hiccup took the seat Jack had offered him.

"So that's Sandy."

"Yeah that would be my best friend. Sad commentary on my life really."

"I didn't think he'd be-"

"mute?"

"-so short."

"Should you really be talking about people's height?" Jack raised an eyebrow.

"Screw you!" Hiccup said through his grin, then continued quickly. "Don't say it!"

Jack cocked his head "Say what?"

Hiccup dropped his voice into a rough imitation of Jack's voice
"We'll see how the night goes."

Jack's eyes widened in shocked astonishment "HICCUP! What kind of guy do you think I am? Quite frankly I'm offended."

"Oh yes, how dare I impugn your nonexistent honor."

"Exactly, you should feel bad."

"Oh I do, truly terrible."

"Well I know something that will cheer you up!"

"Oh?" hiccup raised an eyebrow. Jack gestured toward Sandy who Hiccup now saw was walking toward them carrying a large bowl. He placed it on the table with a flourish and Hiccup stared at the enormous confectionery construction set before him. The ice cream was stacked at least a foot high, vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, and several other flavors that Hiccup couldn't place dripping in chocolate sauce and melted caramel, all topped with at least a dozen kinds of candies and sliced fruits. It took several moments for Hiccup to tear his gaze from the dessert to meet Jack's wide grin. "What on earth is this?"

"Well technically it is a number 11 which is a little of everything behind the counter, but its affectionately called a sugar coma."

"I can see why." Hiccup couldn't help smiling as he looked at the ridiculous amount of sweets balanced on the ice-cream.

"Well, its not going to eat itself, dig in!" Jack grinned as he followed his own advice and carved off a hunk of ice-cream so large Hiccup was amazed he could fit the whole thing in his mouth. Following Jack's example Hiccup dug out his own more reasonably sized bite. The pair made their way through the ice cream steadily, Sandy joining in with their conversion. their speech became more and more lured as their mouths grew colder and colder until they all devolved into giggling fits. As they finished the last of the ice cream Sandy returned from a back room where he'd retreated, carrying two mugs of hot chocolate. Hiccup smiled as the warm liquid malted the chill from his mouth.

"Thanks Sandy." Jack said as he downed his own coco before turning to Hiccup. "So how do you like Sweet Dreams?"

"How have I lived here my whole life and never knew it was here?"

"Well they don't really advertise much, so its understandable."

"Well now that I know its here we'll have to come back again." Hiccup blushed as he realized just what he'd actually said.

Jack grinned "Definitely." Hiccups grinned back at Jack, the two just kinda starring at each other until Hiccups phone rang. He dropped his eyes quickly and pulled out the phone to see a text from Astrid

Astrid: _Hey, you still out with Jack?_

Hiccup rolled his eyes and then caught sight of the time as he closed the text, it was already quarter past ten. "Oh shit, I've got to get home before my dad gets home."

Jack blinked "You out past curfew?" he asked, wondering why Hiccup seemed so worried about getting home after his dad.

"No, its just that he thinks I went to the movies with Astrid."

"Oh...why?"

"Well, I couldn't exactly tell him I was going on a date with you." A quick smile flashed across Hiccup's face as he said the word 'date' and Jack felt a little wash of warmth mix with the sinking feeling in his stomach.

"Why not?" Jack asked after a slight hesitation.

Hiccup gave a deep sigh, his shoulders slumping "Because he'd probably disown me."

"Oh...well I'll call Aster then." Jack pushed himself out of his seat and walked over toward the counter, pulling his phone out of his pocket as he went. Aster picked up after the second ring.

" 'lo?"

"Hey, Hiccup needs to get home. Would you pull around and get us?"

"Oh, uh yeah sure thing Jackie, be there 'n a sec...Hey is everything ok?" Aster must have detected the slightly off tone of Jack's voice.

"What? Yeah things are fine." Jack lied, making a note to be more cheerful when he got back to the table.

"...Alright Jack, see you in a mo'."

Jack hung up and made his way back to the table, painting a smile across his face. "Aster will be here in just a minute."

Hiccup still seemed down as he responded "Oh, thanks." He stood and pushed his chair in, the table separating them as they looked at each other awkwardly. "Don't really feel like dealing with, uh, all that crap just yet. I don't mean to cut things short, I mean I had a really great time tonight and I do hope we can do it again sometime, if you want to of course." Jack didn't have to force the smile as Hiccup rubbed the back of his neck nervously, he really did not have a right to be this cute. Of course the smile threatened to vanish nearly as soon as it had appeared and he had to force one again as he responded.

"I had a really good time too." The air felt heavy between them, a new experience for Jack considering how immediately he had seemed to click with Hiccup. Hiccup smiled in return as Jack made started guiding them toward the door, he couldn't be sure but he thought that

Hiccup had noticed what had been lacking from his response. "Thanks Sandy," Jack said as they passed the blonde. "I'll text you later k?"

Sandy nodded and waved at them. Hiccup waved back "It was nice to meet you." With that they were outside in the cool night air, the streetlight directly above them casting a hazy glow over the pair. They were only outside for a moment before Aster's Jeep pulled up.

Hiccup climbed into the Jeep silently, his stomach heavy with the feeling that he'd somehow messed this night up, like he'd known he would. It was pretty obvious, he'd practically asked Jack on a second date and Jack had completely ignored it, even after what he'd said not long before that. Maybe he was mad Hiccup had had to cut the night short? Jack didn't seem the type to let something like that bother him but then Hiccup had only known him for a week, maybe he was just the type.

Hiccup spent the first half of the silent ride home trying to figure out what exactly had happened to ruin what he had thought was an enjoyable night. Aster seemed to be unable to stand more the ten minutes of silence and so soon he started asking Hiccup questions about Sweet Dreams which Hiccup answered with short answers, not really wanting to talk at the moment. It was a relief then when they pulled up outside his house.

"Alright Hiccup, here's yer stop. It was good ta meetcha." Aster inclined his head to Hiccup as he unbuckled himself.

"Thakns for a fun night Hiccup, I'll text you later." Jack said, obviously forcing a smile and waving to Hiccup who has stepped out of the car now. He to forced a smile and waved back.
>"I'll talk to you later then." He doubted he would. With that he closed the car door and walked quickly toward his house. He made it all the way through the front door, across the living room, and into his room before the first angry tear seeped from the corner of his eye. He was angry at his dad for making him cut the night short, and he was angry at himself for daring to think that something good might actually be happening to him. How stupid could he be.<p>

So, uh, yeah, there it is. (I promise this won't have a long of a wait, cause I'm not that evil ;P)

8. Chapter 8

Finally at the end of a crazy semester and looking forward to a nice summer break with time to actually write non-school related stuff (I printed out over 2000 sheets of paper this semester o.o) and so I decided to start with this! ^.^ Sorry its a bit short, I'm going out of town for memorial day weekend but when I get back I intend to spend the week working on a nice long chapter 9! As always thanks so much to everyone who favorites and comments on my stories, your feedback mean the world to me!

Jack spent the ride home staring out of the window, wanting to be able to wish that the night had never happened and finding that utterly impossible. He wanted to be able to write off the events of the night as unfortunate and wake up tomorrow no worse for ware, but

he couldn't. He'd really enjoyed his night with Hiccup, and he'd been completely sincere when he'd talked about doing it again. He was thinking about a clever way to ask Hiccup on a second date when he'd gone and said what he'd said. Jack had decided soon after coming out that he wasn't going to date someone who wasn't out to the people they lived with be they parents, roommates, or whatever. It wasn't that Jack had anything against people who were closeted, he wasn't on of those guys who wanted to drag everyone out of the closet kicking and screaming or belittled closeted people for being cowards. It was just something that he did not want to deal with in his life, the sneaking around, the lying, and the inevitable explosion when everything came out. He knew all to well what it did to a couple when those close are vehemently against their relationship. The accusations of 'you turned my boy gay' or the promises of 'I won't let you drag him to hell with you!' tended to be hard on both people. Aster and Pitch were the closest couple Jack knew (other then his parents) and there were moments during the fiasco with Pitch's mother that Jack thought they weren't going to make it.

Apparently Aster noticed something was up, or maybe he just didn't feel like listening to music at that moment, but either way he flipped off the radio and turned to face Jack. "How'd the night go Frostbite?"

"Fine." Jack's voice was dull as he continued to stare out the window.

Aster was silent as he looked at Jack for a long minute before turning back to the road. "Alright then, glad to hear it." The rest of the car ride passed in silence and Jack was out of the car the moment Aster threw the Jeep into park.

"Hey honey! How'd it go? Jack?" Jack didn't answer or look toward his mother as he power walked through the room to the door. He made the normally two minute walk to his room in just over thirty seconds and slammed his heavy door behind him.

He let out a heavy sigh and brought up a hand to rub his eye. A trill chirp greeted him as a little green bird landed on his head. "Hey Baby Tooth." Jack's voice was heavy as he reached up and scratched the small bird's head. He sighed again as he sat down on the edge of his bed and crossed his arms in his lap. Why did Hiccup have to click with him so damn well? What right did the freckled little dork have to cause a reaction like this? Why on earth was he this upset over someone he'd met a week ago? Sure he liked Hiccup a lot (like a _lot_ a lot), but he was still practically a stranger! Jack wished could just go back to the way things were a week ago before he asked Hiccup out and just be friends with him-except he couldn't. He didn't know why he couldn't, he just knew he couldn't.

He flopped down on his bed wanting to just fall asleep. Maybe his head would be clearer in the morning. "Nox" he said in a clear loud voice and the lights in his room went out. He turned and tossed for hours, his mind buzzing with half thoughts that kept going circles around how much he liked Hiccup, and how much the idea of dating someone in Hiccup's position terrified him. Finally giving up on sleep as a lost cause for the time being Jack hauled himself out of bed and slipped out of his room, creeping to the kitchen for a little comfort food. When he eased open the kitchen door he was only a little surprised to see Aster sitting in a chair at the table,

rubbing his eyes as Jack closed the door behind them.

"What took ya so long Frostbite." Aster yawned.

"How did you know I was coming down?"

"Oh please Jack, when you got back from yer date you looking like someone kicked yer puppy. I knew somethin' was wrong, and that you would naturally make your way to the ice cream 'afor to long. Speaking of which, you want Peanut Crunchy or Death by Chocolate?"

Jack grinned as he walked over and took the seat next to Aster. "I'll do Death by Chocolate."

"Good choice, cause ther's only one Peanut Crunchy left, and its mine." Aster said from his position buried halfway in the freezer. He emerged with two pints of ice cream and, grabbed two large spoons from a drawer, and returned to his seat by Jack. "So, what has Jackie headin' to the midnight ice cream?"

Jack sighed as he opened his ice cream and dug in. "...I...I just..." He sighed again and stared at the spoonful of ice cream in his hand.

"Alright, why don't you tell me about yer date then?"

Jack turned in his seat to face Aster and leaned back onto the rear legs. "Well, you know how it started. We picked him up-and I think he might have been waiting at the front door because he opened it really fast when I knocked, which is kind of adorable-and then you pulled that shit with the scissors," Jack paused for a moment to allow Aster to laugh before continuing, "and then we got to the movie. I got him a pretzel, he asked about where I got my money and I kinda dodged the question - didn't really want to drop the 'multibillionaire family' bomb on the first date. Anyway, we watched the movie and there was a little incident with the popcorn-"

"Wait, you didn' actually _try_ the scissor thing?!"

"What? No, do you think I'm stupid?"

"Well then what kinda 'incident' was it?"

"Some popcorn ended up getting spilled...all over us. He was moving his leg and kinda kicked the bucket into the air and, uh, onto my head." Aster blinked before bursting out laughing and soon Jack was joining him with a small chuckle. He was feeling warm, recounting the date like this, remembering all the fun he'd had that night with Hiccup. When Aster had gotten control of himself he gestured for Jack to continue. "So anyway, after that I pulled the whole stretch yawn thing and he seemed to like that, and then I think we almost kissed and-"

"Almost? How d'ya almost kiss someone?"

"Well, his face was right next to mine, and he was coming closer and then the movie got loud and it startled both of us and he pulled away."

>"That's unfortunate."<p>

"Yeah...so then we went to Sweat Dreams, and Sandy was there and I introduced them. I got us a sugar coma, and we were just talking when he mentioned he had to get home. When I asked him why he said...he said that his dad would loose it if he found out he was on a date with a guy." Jack said with a very crestfallen look that turned into one of irritation when he noticed Aster's confused expression.

"...and? Is that it? It sound like things went well, if not as long as you might have hoped?"

"They did, which is part of the problem!" Jack waved his hands exasperatedly as he spoke. Aster clearly did not understand, and so Jack tried to put his thoughts into a coherent sentence. "I had a really great time with Hiccup, like a really great time. I've never clicked with someone like I did with him!"

"...and that's a problem?" Aster asked slowly.

"No! Well, yes...I mean kinda..."

"Your loosing me Frostbite."

"Its a bad thing because I don't think I can go out with him. I don't think I could deal with that."

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"I believe I may understand what's got Jack so upset." Jack jumped violently as Pitch's voice sounded from directly behind him. He would have fallen backward out of the chair if a long fingered hand hadn't grabbed the back and steadied it. Jack's heart was still pounding as he turned in his seat to stare at Pitch who had appeared out of nowhere, something he had an annoying habit of doing.

"When did you get here?"

"A few minutes ago. I came to see how much longer you were going to be tying up Aster, but I didn't want to interrupt."

"Little late for that don't you think?" Jack was a bit irritated now. Somewhere very deep down, he liked Pitch, but this had been a private brother brother moment.

"I suppose, but I couldn't watch you flounder around for an explanation any longer."

"What is that supposed to mean?" Jack was defensive now.

"It mean, unless I am much mistaken, you were trying, and failing spectacularly at articulating that you were reluctant to enter into a relation that would involve sneaking around behind the back of your partner's parents, yes?"

Jack sighed as he deflated, the irritation fading into begrudging gratitude that Pitch had successfully vocalized some of the issue.

"That's part of it."

>"Well wha's the rest?" Aster asked, shifting in his seat so that Pitch could sit comfortably on his leg.<p>

"What would happen if the sneaking around didn't work. Hiccup made it pretty clear that his dad would be, uh, less than thrilled with him being gay."

"And?"

>"And I've seen what that's like OK?" Jack shouted. "I've seen what it does to a couple, even one that's been together for years, and I don't want to go through that." Jack looked away as he finished. Pitch's parents were a taboo subject in his house, as was any discussion of the time during which Pitch and Aster were dealing with them. Nobody liked to think back to that time, when walking by the couple's room would more often than not mean overhearing some part (usually Aster's) of a shouting match. It had gotten so bad that the rest of the family were pretty sure Pitch had moved into his office for a couple weeks, though with the sporadic hours Pitch sometimes kept they were never able to confirm their suspicions.<p>

Aster made to speak but Pitch forestalled him with a raised hand. "Jack, not everyone's father is a bitter, antiquated waste of oxygen who's greatest contribution to the world was passing from it, nor are their mother's overly loyal control freaks without the common sense to walk away from a fight they've already lost. Don't let what happened with my parents stop you from perusing this Hiccup boy." Pitch's voice was softer then Jack was used to hearing it with a distinct lack of the usual sarcasm. Jack made to speak but Pitch cut him off as well. "And about the whole sneaking around issue, try and think of it from his perspective. Its not often an easy thing to do, accepting that you differ from the norm. It took several weeks with Aster before I could finally admit that my interest was more then just a passing curiosity, and even longer before I was comfortable with it. I would hazard a guess that it is much the same for this boy, if not worse. He has likely never been able to express that part of himself to anybody before, even himself."

Maybe Jack's brain was a bit frazzled from his emotional state, or maybe it was just three in the morning, but when he looked at Pitch his expression was blank. "Uhhh...what?"

"What he's sayin Jack, is that it sounds like Hiccup doesn't get much chance ta be himself at home, and he's probably not used to it. Not everyone is lucky enough ta have parents like North 'n Anna. From what 'es said about 'is Da he probably has to pretend so hard that he's straight that that's what's easist for 'im. If ya really like 'im then give 'im a chance ta be himself with himself before ya ask 'im to be himself with the rest of the world."

"That is what I just said!"

"Yes dear, but ya have ta remember, not all of us are as smart as you."

Jack smiled. Hearing his worries voiced out loud and Aster and Pitch's advice had made him realize that he had kinda been overreacting to the whole situation. So what if he had to pretend that he was just Hiccup's friend around his dad? That's all he was right now, so it wouldn't be any different then how things would be if he tried to be just friends accept there wouldn't be a chance for things to grow at that point. "You know, you guys actually give pretty good advice."

"Well I figure I if I'm gonna take full advantage of the whole torment ya part of being a brother, I should at least give this part a try eh?" Aster nudged Jack with his elbow and dug out the last bite of his ice cream.

Jack chuckled "Thank you." Jack gave Aster a genuine smile.

"Any time Jack, you know that."

"Yes, well glad you got that worked out Jack, and I wish you the best of luck in your attempts not to scare away this poor boy." Pitch said, essentially killing the moment. When Aster gave him a look he shrugged "Its past three in the monring."

"Sorry for keeping you so long." Jack directed the comment at Aster.

"Its fine Jack."

"Yes, well if your quite done here, its my turn to tie you up." The look Pitch gave Aster with the comment made Jack shudder and he fake gagged.

"TMI! TMI!" Jack shouted as he headed for the door to the hall, both Pitch and Aster's laugh following him as he opened it and turned toward his room. He shook his head as he walked through the quiet house, the moonlight shining in through the occasional window the only source of light. Not that Jack needed it, he could navigate most of this house in total darkness if necessary, a few parts of his parents floor and North's workshop being the only exceptions to that. After a few minutes of enjoying the quiet and the feeling of relief that had replaced his earlier indecision and distress Jack pulled out his phone and scrolled to the end of his last conversation with Hiccup. Shifting the phone in his hands Jack began to type.

Good going Hiccup, you screwed things up- just like you knew you would. Hiccup kicked off his shoes, locked the front door, and headed straight toward his room, shedding his cloths as he went until he fell face first onto his bed with only his boxers and one sock remaining. Not bothering to lift his head Hiccup groped for his blanket until he found it and pulled it over himself.

A weight landed on the bed by his head and paws started kneading his shoulder through the blanket. "Not now Toothless," Hiccup's words were muffled by his mattress. The kneading continued, as Hiccup had expected it too, now accompanied by the occasional small meow. After several minutes Hiccup finally gave in and rolled onto his side, allowing Toothless to rush over and curl up next to his chest, purring softly. Hiccup sighed. "Thanks, I know you're always here for me Toothless," He whispered as he scratched the cat behind the ear lightly. "I really don't know what I was thinking," Hiccup spoke to the ceiling. "I mean I should have just said no and saved myself the trouble. At least then maybe we could still be friends, but no, I had to be an idiot. Something was bound to go wrong, after all we already learned that I'm just not allowed to be happy." Toothless adjust himself and a rough tongue licked Hiccup's chin. "Thanks Bud."

Briiiiiing Briiiiiing Briiiiiing Hiccup heard his phone ringing

from his pants pocket across the room. Slowly he pushed himself up off the bed and shuffled over to retrieve it. Fishing it out of his pocket he saw Astrid's picture on the screen. He did not want to answer this call; He knew Astrid was probably excited to talk to him about how wonderful his date was, waiting to hear every juicy detail, which he had absolutely no interest in reliving at the moment. Still he knew his best friend, and he would be ignoring her for at least ten minutes before she gave up trying to get a hold of him by phone, and even then it wasn't out of the question that she would just show up at his front door. With that reality in mind he answered the call and lifted the phone to his ear slowly. "Hi."

"Hey! So how did it go? You have to tell me everything."

"..." Hiccup didn't know how to answer, hearing the excitement in her voice, so much like his own from earlier that night, was almost too much for him; he'd disappointed her, just another thing he'd screwed up that day.

Astrid's voice was cautious when she spoke again "Hiccup?"
>"I'm here."<p>

"...how'd it go?"

Not knowing what else to say Hiccup lunched into an explanation of the night; Jack picking him up, Astrid's prank, the movie, the incident with the popcorn, the walk to Sweet Dreams, Sandy, their conversation and Jack's total change in demeanor. Astrid, who was silent through his whole retelling, now spoke slowly. "Well, that doesn't necessarily mean something went wrong, maybe-"

"You weren't there Astrid. It was pretty obvious that something had upset him."

"Yeah but-"

"God I'm such an idiot. How could I be stupid enough to fool myself into trying this? You know the really shitty thing about this whole night? I actually thought things were going pretty well tonight, even thought it might actually lead somewhere." Hiccup snorted derisively past the lump in his throat.

"Hiccup-"

"I actually liked him Astrid, like, a lot, and now not only do I have no chance at a relationship, but I've probably destroyed any chance at even being friends." Hiccup's words were interspersed with small sobs now.

"What makes you think that Hiccup? Even if something did go wrong tonight, that doesn't mean he's not going to want to be your friend."

"_If_? Please Astrid, it couldn't have been more obvious I'd fucked up somehow if he's just walked off and left me there. God...fuck this." Hiccup buried his face in his hands leaving the phone lying next to his head. "I should just accept that I'm supposed to be measurable and get it over with. It would be easier than this anyway, than trying to be happy and having it end up-end up-" Hiccup's voice broke and he started crying in earnest, his shoulder's shaking as he

sobbed despite his best effort not to. Astrid tried to help, calm him down somehow, but there wasn't really anything she could say at this point so she just stayed on the phone with him and waited until he had cried himself out, which took about twenty minutes.

After several moment of silence from Hiccup Astrid spoke. "Hiccup, you there?"

"Yeah." Hiccup croaked, his voice raspy and raw.

"Try not to blame yourself for whatever happened Hiccup."

"Why not? It was my fault."

"Just try not to think about itso much. I know it sucks but its not the end of the world."

"Yeah, whatever." Hiccup wasn't usually so dismissive, but he was completely exhausted by what had taken place that night and now he just wanted to sleep.

"Just try to-"

"Whats the point?"

"...I'm coming over."

"What? No Astrid you don't need to-"

"The hell I don't! I may have been a shit best friend before, but I'll be damned if I'm gonna leave you alone when your feeling like this! I'll be there in twenty minutes."

"No Astrid I mean it, please don't. If your here when my dad gets home he's gonna wonder why and then he'll notice I'm upset and he'll start asking questions and I really just don't want to deal with that right now."

"Well you can't expect me to just leave you Hiccup...not after..."

Hiccup couldn't blame her for worrying, and the boulder in his chest lightened a tiny bit at her concern. "Look, I promise I wont...do anything stupid. I'll call you first thing when I get up in the morning ok? Just...please I really don't want to deal with my dad tonight on top of everything else."

Astrid was silent for a long moment before reluctantly agreeing "...fine. But if I don't hear from you by eight I'm coming over I don't care if I have to drive through your front door."

The smallest trace of a smile pulled at the edge of Hiccup mouth for a fraction of a second. "Deal. Now I'm really tired, I just wanna go to bed please."

"Alright. Remember, nothing stupid."

"I know."

"...I love you Hiccup."

Hiccup started. Astrid wasn't the kind of person to get emotional like that. They were best friend, they both knew they cared about one another but there didn't really ever voice it. "Love you too Astrid.

"Goodnight Hiccup."

"Night Astrid." Hiccup hung up the phone and placed it on his bedside table. He closed his eyes and his body and mind were so exhausted from the event of the night that he was out in a matter of minutes.

_BZZZZZT BZZZZZT *_BZZZZZT BZZZZZT* _Hiccup blinked his eyes slowly at his phone's buzzing. His head was throbbing, his eyelids felt incredibly heavy, he just felt miserable overall. Hiccup grabbed his phone, groaning as the mussels in his arm stretched. He froze at the name on the screen: "Jack :)"

9. Chapter 9

Wow its been way to long since i posted a chapter of this! I have no excuse except distractions, a sever case of writer's block (which led to some serious restructuring of this story) and taking time to work on some other things that I've been toying with for a while, a couple of which may wind up here at some point. Anyway, sorry for the wait and hope you enjoy!

Jack: _Hey Hiccup. Sorry to send this so late, text me when you get this k?_

Hiccup squinted at the text, unable to look away despite his watering eyes. Finally glancing away he caught site of the flashing red readout of his alarm clock; 2:14 A.M.. Why on earth was Jack texting him this late at night? Could he not wait till tomorrow for the 'it's not you it's me' talk? His hand shook a bit as he began to type. _Hey Jack, whats_- *Delete Delete Delete* _Its really late, what do you wa-_ *Delete Delete Delete* _I got it._ *Send*

Jack: _Oh, I didn't think you'd be awake this late. Did I wake you?_

Hiccup: _Uh, sorta_

Jack: _Oh, sorry about that_

Hiccup: _So...?_

Jack: _Oh yeah! I wanted to ask if you wanted to hang out tomorrow?_

Hiccup stared at the phone in shock, his exhaustion forgotten in a sudden surge of adrenalin as his tired mind launched into motion. Jack wanted to hang out tomorrow. Jack wanted to see him again-tomorrow! Maybe whatever he'd sensed that night hadn't been as big a deal as he thought it had. Or maybe Jack just wanted to break it off in person...no, that could have waited until tomorrow to set up, couldn't it? Besides, he would be able to see Hiccup at school on Monday if that was all he wanted. Unless he didn't want to do it in a

public place like that, did Jack think he would make a scene? Hiccup growled in frustration as the amazingly resilient hopeful part of him warred with the more pessimistic rest of him.

Maybe it was because he was incredibly tired, maybe it was a residual lack of caring from earlier that night, or maybe he was just sick and tired of the twisting feeling in his gut. Whatever the reason, Hiccup found himself typing out, perhaps a bit more viciously than his phone deserved, _Look if you wanna do the whole 'I don't think its gonna work speech' just go for it, I appreciate the chivalry or whatever of doing it in person, but you don't need to feel obligated too._ He promptly hit send before he could have a chance to regret it, which he did about the same time the "message sent" notification appeared.

Hiccup let out a groan that morphed into a frustrated shout and he had to fight the urge to throw his phone across the room. "Good job Hiccup. No really that was just brilliant! Way to crush any residual chance of things even possibly working out between you and- *Riiiiiiiiing Riiiiiiiiing*" Hiccup jumped as the phone in his hand suddenly rang out. He knew that it couldn't really have been anybody else, but was still surprised to see Jack's name flashing as the incoming call. The phone rang seven times before he gathered the nerve to flip it open and put it to his ear "H-hello?"

"Hey Hiccup, I didn't think you were gonna answer for a moment there." Jack's voice was clearly nervous as he spoke.

"Me neither."

"Yeah..." Jack let out a sigh before speaking, "Look Hiccup...I, uh, I obviously need to apologize to you for how our date ended as it has clearly left you with the wrong idea. I was kinda a huge ass and I really hope you can forgive me cause I would really like to see you again, well as a date that is, I'm mean of course I'd want to see you either way but I'd prefer if it was in date form and I'm going to stop talking now." Jack said in one breath. After several seconds of silence Jack spoke cautiously "Uh...Hiccup?"

"Yes!-er, I mean, sure I, uh, I'd like that." Hiccup stammered, still processing the sudden turn of events.

"Really? Great!" Jack half shouted into the phone before lowering his voice to an acceptable level. "How about tomorrow, or later today I suppose?"

"Sure, er, at least I think that should work, I'd have to let my dad know but it should be fine. What do you want to do?"

"We can just hang out?"

"That sounds like fun, where do you want to go?"

"We don't have to go out somewhere, I mean unless you wanted to go somewhere?"

"No not really...so you want me to come to your place tomorrow?"

Jack took a minute to answer, and when he spoke his voice was careful

"Uh, actually my house wouldn't work very well tomorrow, how about yours?" Hiccup didn't know to respond. On the one hand, he had no desire to be in the same house with both Jack and his father at the same time. Sure there weren't really even dating yet, having only had the one date, so it wasn't like they'd be making out on the couch or anything, but still Hiccup wasn't sure he'd be able to keep his cool spending the entire day with his father and his...guy that he liked. On the other hand, Jack's mood shift the previous night had come about around the time Hiccup had brought up his father and he didn't want to risk messing things up again by bringing it up. Evidently his silence had been enough of an answer because Jack spoke "Its not like I'm going to jump you at the front door Hiccup."

"Wha- No thats not- well I mean its part but- I know you wouldn't-"

"Look Hiccup, you told me last night that your dad doesn't know about you, and you would rather he not find out and I understand that. I promise to keep things friendly and not let on, no matter how much I might want to jump you at the front door."

Hiccup blushed and covered his face with a hand despite the fact he was alone. Rubbing his eyes he thought for a few more seconds before his desire to see Jack again won out and he gave in. "Alright fine, you can come over tomorrow. What time?"

"How's like eleven? I doubt I'll be able to get Aster to give me a ride earlier then that."

"Sounds good, I'll have time to let my dad know you'll be coming over then."

"So I'll see you in a few hours?"

Hiccup couldn't help smiling at the enthusiasm in Jack's voice and he was incredibly thankful that whatever had happened last night seemed to have past. "Sounds like a plan. So can I go back to sleep now?"

"Yeah, I should get some sleep myself."

"I'll see you later Jack."

"See you then."

-click-

Hiccup stared at his window, glaring at the light peeking into his room between the curtain and window frame, quite rudely informing that he had indeed been lying in his bed trying in vain to fall asleep for nearly the entire night. "Well, might as well get up," Hiccup half spoke half yawned as he rubbed his eyes and sat up in bed, earning him an irritated meow from toothless who had been sleeping soundly in the crook of his arm. "Sorry Bud," Hiccup said to the cat who promptly moved to lay on Hiccup's pillow, curled up, and closed his eyes. Shaking his head Hiccup slid out of bed and pulled on a pair of sweat pants and a t-shirt. Glancing at his alarm clock Hiccup rolled his eyes in irritation at the flashing 5:42. He'd spent the majority of the night, ever since Jack's call, alternating between being excited over the fact that Jack A) did want to see him

again and B) would be seeing him later that day, and worried about being in the same house as both his father and his...guy that he liked. He wasn't really sure how to refer to Jack, even to himself. Friend wasn't right, not that he didn't consider Jack a friend because he did even after such a short time, but there was obviously more there than *just* friendship, or at least Hiccup hoped that there could be. Boyfriend was no good either, after all they'd been on one date and even though they'd agreed to have another 'date' (if you could even call hanging out at Hiccup's house a date) that didn't mean they were actually dating. Special friend, crush, and guy-I-have-occasionally-thought-about-naked were also dismissed for various reasons. That train of thought carried Hiccup out of his room, to that bathroom briefly, and then into the main part of the house. The largest room in the Haddock household was their conjoined kitchen living room, which were separated by a shiny metal strip that marked the transition from the living room's beige carpeting and the kitchen's heavily scuffed hard wood.

Hiccup gave a sigh as he saw his father was awake and at the stove, the smell of eggs and bacon reached Hiccup as he entered the room proper. He pulled out a chair and took a seat at the kitchen table. The noise of the chair legs scraping against the floor alerted Stoick to Hiccup's presence and he turned around, his expression a surprised smile. "Morning son, you're up early."

"Yeah, couldn't really sleep last night." Hiccup propped his head up on his hand, his elbow on the table, and fought against his eyelids which were growing heavier by the second.

"Oh, is uh, is everything alright?" Hiccup pried his eyes open and was confused for a minute as the worried expression adorning his father's face before comprehension dawned on him.

"Yeah, just, must have been cause it was my first night home." Hiccup hoped his explanation would allay Stoick's worries; he really did not need his father paying closer attention to him than usual today.

"Good, good. You hungry? I didn't think you'd be awake this early but I can throw some more on." Stoick gestured to the stove as he turned back to it, grabbing the spatula off the counter where he had set it.

"Uh, sure, thanks." Hiccup said as he tried to gather the nerve to ask his dad about Jack coming over later that day. He wasn't sure exactly why he was so nervous, it wasn't like his dad has any reason to think Jack was more than a friend. Well that wasn't true, he knew exactly why he was so nervous, but he also knew that he really shouldn't have been so nervous right now since his worries about the day were mostly focused on what might happen after Jack arrived. Still, he couldn't keep his stomach completely calm as he opened his mouth to speak. "Uh dad?"

"Hmm?"

"Is it alright if a friend comes over today?"

"Of course Hiccup, you know Astrid is always welcome here." Stoick said from the fridge where he was currently rummaging.

"Uh, actually it's not Astrid dad." Stoick turned around from the fridge and raised an eyebrow at Hiccup.

"Well ya see there's this guy I met at the hospital, Jack and-"

"Jack Frost?" Stoick interrupted him.

"Uh, yeah." Hiccup was taken aback that his dad knew Jack's name.

"I met him at the hospital as well, he's the one who..." Stoick's voice trailed off as the conversation threatened to veer into uncomfortable territory.

"Yeah. We kinda talked a lot while I was there and he wanted to come hang out here now that I'm out, make sure I'm adjusting properly or something."

Stoick looked at Hiccup long enough that he had to fight the urge to fidget under the large man's gaze before smiling. "I'd be glad to have Jack over, he's certainly welcome here." Hiccup breathed a sigh of relief as Stoick turned back to the stove, cracking the eggs he'd just retrieved into one of the pans and dropping several strips of bacon into another. "I'm glad to see that you're making friends."

A combination of embarrassment and guilt caused Hiccup's cheeks to flush slightly as he covered his eyes with his hands, resting both his elbows on the table. "Yeah."

The rest of the morning passed faster than Hiccup would have expected, the breakfast his dad made was good and the meal was pleasantly non-awkward, mostly because Stoick spend most of is reading the Sunday paper and Hiccup was preoccupied with not falling asleep at the table. It was quite irritating that, while lying in bed he was completely awake, but now that he was up and about he felt like he was going to pass out at any moment. The full stomach did not help the situation either and Hiccup zoned out for several minutes before his father's voice roused him. "When is Jack coming?"

"Uh, he said he'd probably be here around eleven."

"Alright. I've got some things to finish outside, would you load the dishes in the washer."

"Sure." Nodding to Hiccup Stoick stood, rinsed his plate in the sink, and headed across the room to the door that led to the back yard. Stretching Hiccup stood and did as his dad asked; loading the dishes from the sink into the washer after making sure they'd been rinsed well. That done Hiccup headed to the bathroom to shower, which turned out to be an unfortunate idea as the warm water didn't do anything to help his drowsiness and he found himself almost dozing off against the shower wall until he turned the temperature down. The cooler water did help him wake up and after cleaning himself, drying off, and wrapping his arm in fresh bandages he found himself in his room trying to decide what to wear for the day. First he'd grabbed one of his nicer button-down shirts but then he realized how silly he would feel dressing up to hang out in his own house, plus it would be sure to raise awkward questions from his father. After sifting through his tee shirts he settled on one of his favorites, a dark green one with a stylized black dragon curling around itself on the chest. That done

he grabbed his phone and text Astrid to insure her there was no need to crash her car into his house on this particular day, catch her up on the events of the previous night and promising to call her that night and tell her e_verything_. Glancing at the clock he saw it was quarter passed seven and groaned at how much time he had to kill. Although to be fair his room was rather messy so maybe it was a good thing that he had some time. Soon Hiccup had completely cleaned his room, a process that was hampered a bit by his injured arm, but he was still pleased with the end product. In fact his room was cleaner now then it had been in months, all the clothes put away in his closet or the hamper, the various papers that had been scattered over his desk had been stacked and placed in drawers or deemed garbage and thrown away. He had even gone so far as to dust the three shelves on the wall above his bed, taking care to clean off the various models and figurines that occupied them. Hiccup was just wrapping the vacuum's cord back up when he noticed a dirt spot on the carpet of the hallway just outside his door. On closer inspection, the hall carpet was littered with cat hair, bits of dirt, and other various household detritus. Not wanting Jack to come over to a messy house Hiccup unwound the cord and set to work vacuuming the hallway and from there it was an easy transition to the living room and before Hiccup knew it he was wiping down kitchen counters and fluffing couch cushions. If he'd stopped to actually evaluate his behavior he would have berated himself for thinking that Jack would care what state his house was in (and it hadn't been that messy to begin with really), at least Hiccup certainly did not think he would, he did not seem the type. Hiccup enjoyed the cleaning though; it gave him something to do with his hands and kept him from dwelling on everything that could possibly go wrong that day. He only stopped cleaning, broom frozen mid sweep, when Stoick entered the kitchen through the back door and gave him a quizzical glance.

"Uhhh, I guess I kinda got into a cleaning mood." Hiccup ran a hand through the back of his hair self consciously as he spoke.

Looking around Stoick grinned. "Well you did a good job, place hasn't looked this clean in months. Feel free to have moods like that more often eh?" Stoick gave a hearty laugh and Hiccup joined in a moment later with a lighter chuckle. "Didn't you say Jack was going to be here at eleven?" Stoick asked as he walked past Hiccup to the kitchen sink where he began to scrub at the grease that was covering his hands.

Hiccup immediately looked at the time on the microwave and was shocked to see the little red 11:17. He'd had had no idea how much time had passed. Sudden worry surged through Hiccup as he began to wonder why Jack wasn't there yet, or had at least not bothered to contact him and he reached into his pocket for his phone only to find it empty. "Uh, yeah he did say that...hold on." Hiccup headed back to his room and after a bit of backtracking found his phone sitting on the bathroom windowsill. Flipping it open he saw he had three new texts.

Jack: _Hey Hiccup just making sure were still on for today :)_

Jack: _Alright were leaving now so we should be there soon._

Jack: _Hit a bit of a snag so I'll be a little late. Assuming we're still good on your end?_

Hiccup frowned, wondering what sort of snag had come up, and what time Jack would be arriving. His question was answered a moment later as the doorbell sounded through the house. Hiccup spun on the spot, pocketing his phone as he did, and speed walked out of his room. Putting on the little burst of speed as he entered the living room Hiccup was just in time to slip in front of his father and answer the door to find Jack standing there in his usual blue hoodie and kakies with a bright smile on his face.

"Hey Hiccup," Jack said happily "sorry I'm a little late."

"Hey." Hiccup returned Jack's smile, most of his anxiety fading away. "Sorry I didn't answer your text, I put my phone down and forgot about it."

"Ah that explains it, hope you weren't too worried."

"About you? Please." Jack tried to arrange his face into a wounded expression but was only able to manage bemused, the corners of his mouth seemingly unable to stop pulling upward. The clearing of a throat behind Hiccup made him start and he turned to see his father standing there, giving him a meaningful look. "Oh, right uh, this is my dad Stoick, dad this is--"

"Jack," Jack extended his arm forward "We've met once before."

"Aye, good to see you again Jack." Stoick took Jack's hand and shook it firmly. "Your most welcome in my home." The sincerity of Stoick's words made Hiccup's stomach squirm with guilt, knowing full well his father would not be saying them if he knew the full extend of Hiccup's new "friendship."

Jack seemed to be of the same opinion as his response was somewhat awkward "Uh, thanks." Then before anything else could be said he continued. "And this is my brother Aster." Jack motioned to Aster who Hiccup had not noticed leaning casually against the side of his house, and stepped aside to let the latter man step forward and offer Stoick his hand.

"Nice ta meet'cha." Aster said before turning to Hiccup "Nice ta' see you again too Hiccup."

"You too," Hiccup responded just before his father spoke.

"Oh you've met before?" Hiccup's heart froze at his father's innocent question. Before he had a chance to properly panic however Jack spoke up.

"Yeah, Aster drove me to the hospital and he stepped in to see Hiccup once." Aster hesitated for a split second before nodding in agreement.

"Right, good to see you're up and about."

"Thanks." Hiccup was impressed how quickly the pair played off each other and was sure his dad hadn't noticed anything amiss with the conversation. He'd only picked up on the lie because he knew the truth.

"When would you like me to pick 'im up?" Aster directed the question

at Stoick.

"I can drive Jack home if you give me your address."

"Ah that's alright, Its a bit o' a drive and I'll be around taking care of some things in town till late."

"Alright then, how about nine?"

"Nine?" Hiccup interjected, surprised at the early time, he was a senior in high school after all.

"Nine," Stoick repeated, " You've got school tomorrow and should get a good nights sleep. Hiccup grudgingly nodded his agreement.

"Nine it is then. You behave yerself now Jackie. Bye Hiccup, Stoick." Aster said, ruffling Jack's hair in an annoying older brother way as he turned and headed back to his Jeep.

As the door closed Stoick spoke "I've got to finish working in the garage for a bit so I'll leave you boys be, let me know if you need anything Hiccup."

"Alright, thanks dad." With that Stoick left, leaving Hiccup and Jack standing by the front door looking at each other awkwardly.

"Soo..." Hiccup rubbed the back of his neck.

"Its good to see you again, I didn't know if you'd want to."

"Oh, well you know. The jokes on you actually because as you can see my house is incredibly boring."

"Well I've only actually seen here." Jack gestured around vaguely.

"Well would you like a tour? Then you can see for yourself how boring it is."

"I'd love one."

"Well, this is the living room." Hiccup gestured to the carpeted half of the room where one large couch took up most of the space, facing a flat screen TV sitting on a small black stand. "Kitchen." Hiccup swept a hand at the kitchen with its spotless counters and small table sitting against one wall, three old chairs pushed in surrounding it. "That way leads to the backyard and the garage," Hiccup pointed to the door his father had vanished through moments ago. "And if you'll follow me," Hiccup said as he walked the few steps to the hallway that lead to his bedroom and bathroom "You will find my room and my bathroom. Well I mean it's not like connected to my room or anything, but it's basically mine since my dad's room does have a connected bathroom. His room is down that hall, only thing down there." Hiccup pointed to the hallway across the living room from the one they currently occupied.

Jack followed Hiccup into his bedroom and looked around, apparently very interested in the smallish room. "Wow, I've not been here five minutes and already you're inviting me to your room. I must really be on my game today."

Hiccup cheek's acquired a dark flush as he glanced around, making sure his father hadn't suddenly materialized hanging from the ceiling or under the bed. He hadn't. "Oh my god," Hiccup shook his head, "please don't say that kinda of stuff when my dad's around." Jack's face fell slightly for a moment before he rolled his eyes.

"Give me some credit Hic, its not like he's anywhere around right now." Hiccup knew Jack was right, and anyway he was too distracted with what Jack had just called him to think about that. Jack had called him that before, but Hiccup hadn't given it much thought as a one off comment. Hiccup smiled unconsciously at the simple thought; Jack had given him a nickname. It was a simple little thing, but it gave Hiccup that warm feeling in his chest that he'd come to associate with Jack. Realizing he was kind of standing there staring at Jack and smiling like an idiot Hiccup blinked several times and cleared his throat. "Right, I guess your right."

His own smile turning into a smirk Jack walked over to one of the shelves against the far wall and examined the various models more closely. "You build all these yourself?"

"Yeah, there a bit of a hobby of mine I guess. I used to do them pretty often."

"Oh? Why'd you stop? You've got some skill-are these hand painted too?"

"Oh, uh yeah, all but the hard plastic bits. And, uh, I just haven't really felt like it lately." It wasn't technically a lie, and Hiccup really didn't feel like thinking about those thoughts at the moment.

"Fair enough. Why not the plastic bits?"

"The paint I used didn't stick to it worth crap so it wasn't worth it. They usually looked alright just plain."

"I'll say," Jack had moved as far as he could down the shelf without climbing onto Hiccup's bed, "So you've kinda got a thing for dragon's huh?"

"I guess." Hiccup rubbed the back of his neck self-consciously, suddenly very aware of just how many dragon models filled the shelves.

"Hey, dragons are cool," Jack said as he turned away from the shelf, "who wouldn't like giant flying fire breathing lizards? Easily the most badass of the mythical creatures."

"Exactly! Plus there always so much smarter then, well really anything. Plus there actually supposed to sparkle, and still manage to look badass doing it." They both laughed.

"So which is your favorite?"

"My favorite...?"

"Dragon?" Jack gestured to the figures.

"Oh, thats easy." Hiccup hopped up on his bed and grabbed a figure from its place right above his pillow and handed it to Jack. Jack could tell a lot of work went into the building and painting of this relatively small black dragon, but there were also several obvious mistakes, scratches where pieces had been incorrectly assembled or handled roughly enough to leave scuff marks. It also had no teeth and half of the creature's tail was missing.

"What makes him so special?" Jack asked in such a way as to not sound like he was casting aspersions on the dragon, but like he was earnestly curious.

"He was the first model I ever did. My, uh, mom got him for me when I was little and we build him together." Hiccup smiled at the dragon for a moment before snatching him out of Jack's hand and going to replace him in his spot on the shelf.

"That's cool." Jack said after a moment. "So where do you get all them?"

"Oh you can order them from different catalogs, websites, craft stores usually have a pretty good selection."

"And what all goes into making them?"

"Oh well that depends..." From there Hiccup launched into a rather lengthy discussion on the process of assembling the model, different types of glue and their pros and cons, various types of paints and brushes and before he knew it all the apprehension and worry he'd been feeling just melted away. Jack seemed genuinely interested in everything Hiccup was saying, occasionally asking questions. Soon the two had settled down, Hiccup taking a seat cross legged on his bed and Jack in Hiccup's desk chair, sitting in it backwards so his hands rested on the back and his chin rested on his hands. After a while the conversation lulled and Hiccup noticed Jack's expression had turned to one of discomfort. "Everything alright?"

"I owe you an apology, a proper in person apology with an explanation that is." Catching Hiccup's suddenly wary expression Jack clarified. "About the way I acted last night. When you said that your dad didn't know...about you, and that he wouldn't react very well if he found out...well I've seen that sort of things nearly destroy a couple and so I had decided that I didn't want to end up with someone in that position. That was pretty upsetting since I, well I really like you and I didn't exactly know how to react aaaaaand I ended up acting like an ass."

Hiccup wasn't exactly sure how to respond, on the one hand Jack was right, he had acted like an ass and caused Hiccup no small amount of distress when he hadn't even done anything wrong really. On the other hand, he really didn't want to be purposefully confrontational and revive the issue. In the end he couldn't stop himself from saying "You were kinda an ass." Jack looked down and away.

"Yeah I know," looking back to Hiccup with a tiny grin he said "I got brought around pretty quick though."

"True, what exactly brought that on, if you don't mind me asking?"

"I had some sense talked into me by Aster, and his boyfriend."

"Well remind me to thank them then." Hiccup said, grinning.

"Oh please don't tell them I said that, I won't hear the end of it for a month."

"That might make us even for you waking me up at two in the morning then."

"It was a pretty good reason to wake up though wasn't it?" Jack raised his eyebrows meaningfully and Hiccup laughed, grudgingly agreeing. "So-"

"Boys!" Stoick's booming voice echoed down the hall and into the room causing Hiccup to jump violently, and spring of his bed as though one of the pillows had stung him?"

"Yeah dad?" Hiccup answered, his voice quavering a little.

"Would you come down here for a moment?"

"Sure, on our way?" Jack looked at Hiccup questioningly, to which Hiccup just shrugged his shoulders, to busy trying to fight the sudden and irrational sense of dread mounting in his stomach. When they arrived in the living room they found Stoick sitting on a kitchen chair tying the laces of a boot large enough to swallow both of Hiccup's shoes and still leave room for a flip-flop. "Bad news Hiccup, one of the machines at the shop broke down, I need to go in and take care of it."

"Oh," Hiccup had to fight to not sigh in relief "well that sucks, but if they need you." Hiccup hoped his disappointment didn't sound too forced. "

I'll probably be gone till evening, so I thought I'd pick up a pizza for us on the way back? How's that sound?"

"Sounds great dad, thanks."

"Are you alright with sausage Jack? Hiccup insists on ruining half the pizza with Pineapple, same as his mother that way, but I don't mind sharing." Stoick had finished with his boots and grabbed a large set of keys from a small hook next to the door.

"Yeah, thats fine."

"Alright, I'll be back later then, you know the rules Hiccup."

"Clean up after any wild parties and be sure to replace any booze before you go looking for it?" Stoick shook his head and chuckled as he stepped outside, closing the door behind him. As the door clicked closed Hiccup couldn't hold back a sign of relief as he locked the door with a 'click'.

"So do you throw a lot of wild parties?" Jack's joking tone sounded from behind Hiccup. Rolling his eyes as he turned around he responded.

"Oh yeah, this house is just party central, booze are in the top cabinet, bathrooms down the hall, theaters downstairs, don't forget the coasters."

"Theater?" Jack chuckled.

"Oh, yeah, my dad put it together a few years ago, I helped get all the stuff working for it. It's nothing big really." Jack raised an eyebrow. "You called it a theater, it can't really be 'nothing'."

"Alright fine, see for yourself."

Hiccup led the way downstairs, flicking the lights on as he got to the bottom of the carpeted stairs, revealing a fully finished basement. Carpet covered the floor, one door on each of the left and right walls separated the main basement area from where their washer and dryer were hidden and kept the sub-pump out of sight. The wall opposite the stairs was painted a slightly off white and was smooth and completely spotless. Three couches faced the wall, one dead center and one on either side. A projector hung from the ceiling just above the center most couch connecting to a series of media players and a few game systems stacked in a rather beat up entertainment center set against the right wall.

"Nice." Jack said as he looked around "Very-OH!" He had caught site of the video game systems. "What games do you have? I bet I can beat you at any game you've got." He said with a smirk.

"Oh will you? You've got yourself a challenge Frost." Most of Hiccup's games were of the single players RPG variety seeing as multiplayer games were much less interesting without multiple players. He did have a couple multiplayer games though, and it was one of those he went for after switching on the projector. Putting the small disk into the system Hiccup grabbed the two wireless controllers from their drawer and tossed one to Jack who caught it before sinking down onto the center couch. Hiccup joined him a moment later, taking a seat next to one of the arms of the couch as the opening cinematic played.

They proceeded to fight one another for quite a while, the score distinctly one sided until Jack declared that Hiccup could no longer play 'that god damn rat, its cheating!' to which Hiccup argued that Jack just couldn't handle Hiccup which lead to several blush inducing comments. In the end Hiccup relented and played other characters, which at least gave Jack a fighting chance though Jack was still pretty sure Hiccup let him win at least a few of their matches.

"Are you sure you want to continue this massacre?" Hiccup asked Jack as they finished another match, giving Hiccup his 9th win in a row.
"

"Never!" Jack cried. "I will be victorious! Besides I've got a new strategy I want to try."

"Suit yourself, I'll take an even ten." Hiccup snarked. Jack grunted.

They started playing and Hiccup didn't notice any sort of change in Jack's strategy, which generally seemed to equate to 'hit hard and

fast' when Jack asked casually "Hey Hic, are you ticklish?"

Focused on dodging Jack's latest attack it took Hiccup a moment to process what Jack had said, and by this it was far too late "Uh-wait wh-shit! Jack th-ah-ahaha this this this aha this is ch-ch-ch-aha-cheating!" Hiccup fought against Jack's insidious fingers as best he could, but with only one good arm he couldn't keep Jack from reaching his sides, the crook of his neck and the backs of his knees and he found himself laughing uncontrollably right along side Jack. In a last ditch effort to escape Hiccup rolled off the couch onto the floor. Jack was on him in a flash, towering over him and pinning him down with one leg thrown over Hiccup's legs, fingers still going at it.

"Surrender Hiccup, surrender and this can all stop."

"N-n-ahah-NEVER!" The defiant effect somewhat ruined by his involuntary laughter.

"Then you have sealed your fate!" Jack continued tickling Hiccup mercilessly for what felt like hours, but was really about three minutes before Hiccup gasped "Ok ok!"

"Hmm? What was that?" Jack down over Hiccup, placing his ear inches from Hiccup's mouth "I didn't quite hear you."

"I surrender, you win." Jack let out a triumphant whoop as he stopped tickling Hiccup whose sides were hurting from all the laughter. "Your an ass." Hiccup said between deep breaths.

"The winning ass." Jack exclaimed smugly, bringing his face right next to Hiccups.

Hiccup rolled his eyes and when he looked back at Jack he was suddenly aware of just how very close their faces were, and that Jack had made no move to back away. Suddenly it was hard to breath for reasons completely unrelated to the viscous tickling he had just received. In a move that seemed somehow both painfully slow and incredibly fast, Jack's face moved closer to his, covering the last few inches between them. Jack's head tilted slightly and Hiccup's head mimicked the motion of its own volition, and then Jack's lips were pressed against his. Hiccup's eyes drifted shut as his brain seemed to go into overload. His chest was filled with excitement, his heart suddenly beating over time. His mind was filled with the feeling of Jack's lips, how warm and soft they felt against his own and the way they moved against his, invoking innate reactions that Hiccup had no control over. The kiss only lasted a few seconds before Jack pulled slowly away. Hiccup's eyes opened slowly, revealing Jack's mystified face hovering inches above his own, brilliant blue eyes sparkling. "Wow..."

"Wow," Jack agreed, a wide smile stretching his lips

"That was, uh...wow." Hiccup smiled as they both chuckled. They stared at each other for several long heartbeats before Hiccup, unsure what exactly had come over him, said "Could we, uh, do that again?" His smile shifting to a smirk Jack leaned forward and pressed their lips together again. Hiccup felt Jack shifting himself above him and a hand slid up to his cheek, cupping it briefly before

continuing on to the back of his head and angling it slightly. And they kissed again.

Hiccup had no idea how long they made out, because that is what they had been doing he realized-holy crap he'd just made out with someone-but eventually they pulled apart for longer then just the few seconds it took to shift positions. He stared at Jack, his brain still trying to process the last unknown amount of time, filled as it was with lips and the occasional clacking of teeth, and even tongues on several occasions, trying to reconcile it with Hiccup's idea of reality.

"Wow," Jack said this time, which snapped Hiccup out of his trance and made him laugh.

"Hey, that's my line." Jack chuckled. They stared at each other smiling for a bit longer, just enjoying each other's presence. Finally Hiccup spoke "Well that was certainly a hell of a first kiss."

"Agreed."

"Wait, was that your first kiss too?" Jack nodded. "Huh, I guess I kinda just assumed you'd done it before."

"You did?"

"Well you seemed to know what you were doing a lot more then I did." Hiccup blushed slightly as he added "And you're pretty good at it."

"Oh, heh, well I've had Aster giving me tips since I turned thirteen. Besides, you're not to bad yourself Hic." Jack grinned as he pushed himself off the floor and onto the couch.

Blushing deeper, his smile undiminished Hiccup said "You know I'm not really surprised." Jack chuckled. There was silence for a minute before Hiccup pushed himself up off the ground "I'll be right back, need to use the bathroom." Jack nodded as Hiccup turned and headed up the stairs.

Reaching the kitchen he took a moment to revel in what had just happened, still not completely able to believe it, and grabbed a glass a water to wet his parched throat. Not wanting to be a bad host and leave Jack alone for to long, and honestly just wanting to be back in his presence again, Hiccup hurried to use the bathroom, a process made more difficult by certain regions insisting on expressing their ecstatic approval of his recent activities. Having finally taken care of that he grabbed two bottles of water from the fridge and headed back downstairs. He found Jack standing in front of the entertainment system, perusing the DVDs lining two of the shelves there. "Hey." Jack said with a smile as Hiccup approached.

"Hey." Hiccup smiled at Jack for a moment before remembering the water bottle in his hand. "Here, thought you might want some water."

"Thanks." Jack took the bottle and drained half of it before screwing the top back on. Slipping the bottle into the pocket of his hoodie he pulled as DVD off the shelf "Is this that dragon thing that was on

the Discovery Chanel a few years ago?" Looking at the case he was holding out Hiccup saw the title "Dragons: A Fantasy Made Real".

"Animal Planet, but yeah, I used to watch the crap out of it when I was younger."

"I never got to see it."

"You wanna watch it?"

"Sure, I mean unless you don't want to."

"Well, it is one of my favorite shows ever, beside, no person who claims to like dragons should go without seeing it." With that Hiccup snatched the box and headed over to put the movie on, switching the projector to the DVD player and grabbing the remote from its place on the shelf. As he did so he heard Jack yawn from behind him, which triggered a yawn of his own as his exhaustion began to return. Turning around back toward the couch he saw that Jack was sprawled out on the middle couch, an arm covering his eyes. He originally planned to take a seat on one of the other couches, but the same sense that had overtaken him before once again took control of his body and he found himself flopping down on the couch next to Jack so they were lying parallel, his back pressed up against Jack's chest. Seemingly caught by surprise for a moment Jack recovered quickly, wrapping an arm around Hiccup's chest and pulling him closer to his chest before placing a small kiss on the back of his neck. Hiccup's chest did a little flip. Pointing the remote Hiccup started the movie and turned the lights off (on of his favorite features).

It wasn't five minutes into the show that his heavy eyelids became to difficult to lift anymore and Hiccup drifted off to sleep, Jack's arm wrapped tightly around him.

10. Chapter 10

**Wow, another chapter? And its not even December yet! This is my sorry for so few updates over the summer, I've actually been working really hard on a project that I hope to sharing more about in the coming months and its taken up a lot of my time. I also made sure to get this posted as I'm starting classes again this Wednesday (which is technically tomorrow I guess) and so I'm not sure what my free time is going to look like just yet. Anyway, hope you enjoy!
^.^**

Hiccup blinked groggily as he awoke from one of the best dreams he'd had in a long time. Several loud bangs sounded from somewhere above his head, which he found odd, what was someone doing on the roof? Hiccup shifted, planning to stretch his arms out, but froze as he registered the arm wrapped snugly around his chest. Hiccup's perception shifted like the flick of a switch as he realized that what he had thought was a dream was in fact reality and he was at that moment lying in his basement with Jack's arm holding him close to the other boy, his smooth rhythmic breathing telling Hiccup that Jack too had fallen asleep. Hiccup would have loved to simply lie there and enjoy the moment, but the calm of the moment was shattered by the sound of an opening door and his father's booming voice. "Boys!" There was a moment of silence in which Hiccup pushed himself

away from Jack, wincing as his arm flared with pain, and onto the ground facing the screen which was playing the introduction to the show they'd been watching on repeat. Just as Hiccup landed and arranged himself like he was sleeping on the floor the light flicked on and muffled footfalls sounded from the steps along with a more questioning "Boys?"

Pushing himself up on his good arm slowly Hiccup blinked in exaggerated fashion and turned around toward the source of his father's voice, wincing at the bright light shining from behind him. "Hey dad."

Stoick squinted in confusion he glanced from Hiccup to Jack who had pushed himself into a sitting position on the couch, rubbing the side Hiccup had pushed off of him in a pained sort of way.

"I guess we fell asleep..." Hiccup poured as much innocent confusion into his voice as he could, hoping his father couldn't hear the pounding of his heart.

"Guess you really didn't get much sleep last night," Stoick looking concerned for a moment before his face rearrange into its more usual expression "Well time to get up them, there's fresh Pizza upstairs!" He looked at Hiccup for a second longer before turning and heading back upstairs.

"Owww..." Jack moaned pitifully once the door closed behind Stoick, still rubbing his side.

"Sorry, I kinda panicked." Hiccup apologized, his voice low as he glanced at where his father's feet had vanished a moment earlier.

"Its alright, besides, I guess it was worth it all things considered." Jack grinned at Hiccup who grinned back.

"We should get upstairs," Hiccup said as he stood, "my half will be safe, but if you actually want any pizza you'd better hurry and stake your claim."

"Alright," Jack also stood, "just one thing real quick."

"What-" Hiccup started to question but was cut off as he suddenly found himself turned around and pulled to Jack, soft lips pressed against his for a brief moment.

"Just wanted to do that one more time." Hiccup stepped back from Jack as he glanced nervously again at the stairs before turning back to smile at him.

"Let's go." Hiccup turned and led Jack upstairs. Opening the door to the kitchen Hiccup saw a large pizza covering over half their small table, several pieces missing from the sausage half. He was also surprised to see his dad seated on the living room couch with his plate of pizza and a large glass of soda. Usually Stoick insisted on eating at the table, saving the living room for special occasions. Grabbing plates and cups Hiccup handed one set to Jack and poured them each a drink. Grabbing two slices of Pizza Hiccup quickly moved to sit across the couch from his father, leaving the armchair for Jack. The panic of his father nearly discovering him and Jack lying

on the couch like that hadn't completely left Hiccup and he spent most of the meal trying not to look as anxious as he felt. If Jack felt uncomfortable in any way he didn't show it, carrying on casual conversation with Hiccup and Stoick who seemed to be making an effort to make small talk.

"So Jack, are you in the same year as Hiccup?"

"Yeah, we don't have any classes together though. I do everything I can to avoid math." Stoick chuckled.

"What do you do then?"

"Well I've got your basic senior classes, chemistry and biology, a gym class, study hall, English for seniors. My favorite classes though are easily Orchestra and Band." That perked Hiccup's interest a bit as Jack hadn't mentioned being in any of the school musical groups before.

"Really? What do you play?" Stoick asked.

"Uh, well I play a lot of things, but in orchestra I play the violin, and in band I'm on the double bass." Hiccup had seen the band and orchestra play during several mandatory school assemblies but he couldn't for the life of him remember seeing Jack anywhere among their number, thought to be fair it wasn't as though he had been actively paying attention to the members.

"Really? That's impressive. Hiccup used to play piano you know."

"Oh?"

"He means I took lessons for a year when I was little."

"Hey you were pretty good for a six year old, when we could keep you focused on the keys that is." Stoick chuckled, Hiccup rolled his eyes as Jack joined in the laughter.

The conversation lulled for a bit as the three focused on their pizza, however, much to Hiccup's surprise his father picked up the conversation again. "So Jack, your brothers quite a bit older than you isn't he?"

"Wha? Oh uh," Jack took a moment to swallow his pizza "I guess. My parents adopted him a few years before me. He was born in Australia, hence the accent, and they adopted him when he was fourteen. My dad says that my mom was starting to go a little maternal crazy cause they had been trying for a while and that his solution to keep his sanity was Aster 'n me, which he always says in retrospect wasn't the best thought out plan." Jack grinned cautiously as Stoick burst out laughing.

"I'm sure you weren't that bad, you seem like a fine young man to me."

"You might be a little bias." Hiccup piped in pointedly, starting to get a little worried having watched Jack's expression go from nervous to happy to what he could only call hopeful. Hiccup was quite certain that his father's opinion of Jack would change considerably had he

been witness to their earlier activities and he hoped Jack would catch his meaning.

"Oh psh, I'm an excellent judge of character." Jack seemed to find that funny as he began to giggle to himself. He didn't offer an explanation, something that Hiccup found himself thankful for though he wasn't exactly sure why.

From there the conversation turned to Hiccup's upcoming return to school, which he'd been doing his best to avoid thinking about that day. He knew he was going to have a mountain of work to catch up on, at least two weeks worth give or take, since he'd been in the hospital for half a week, and essentially ignoring school for the week before that.

"Yeah it's going to suck." Jack commiserated "We should work on catching up together!"

"I thought you said you did not have classes with Hiccup?"

"I don't, not with him anyway, but we have a lot of the same classes, except for the math ones like I said."

"Ah, well I don't see a problem with that. You are welcome to come over and work on homework if you like Jack." Jack nodded and smiled, Hiccup had to work to keep the astonishment off his face. He was impressed. Jack had just managed to get himself invited over after school for the foreseeable future in such a way that his father wouldn't have a reason to think twice about it. Still Hiccup thought it was a little presumptuous, after all he hadn't spoken with Jack about it. Not that he didn't want Jack to come over, it was pretty much guaranteed to make the school work suck a lot less, but it would still have been nice of him to ask. Apparently Stoick had a similar thought as well, as he turned to Hiccup at that moment.

"Er, well assuming Hiccup is feeling up for company of course." Hiccup pursed his lips and made a show of thinking it over.

"Well I don't know if I'm up to doing both our homework." Jack put a hand to his chest dramatically.

"Hiccup you wound me! I'd never make you do my homework!." Hiccup rolled his eyes and Stoick looked from Jack to Hiccup as though waiting to be told how to respond, in the end he settled for on a small chuckle.

"Yeah, I could use some company getting through everything I guess." Hiccup said, being serious now.

"Alright, I still have to work late so Jack will have to get here on his own, but I can bring you home if necessary." Stoick said, directing the last part at Jack.

"He can just walk from school with me dad."

"Are you sure your feeling up to that Hiccup?"

"Yeah dad I'm fine, it's like a ten minute walk." Stoick looked like he wanted to argue but just gave a little nod instead.

"Alright, if your sure, what about you Jack?"

"Oh thank you for the offer Mr. Haddock, but I'm pretty sure I can arrange a ride home for myself. I'll be sure to let you know if that changed though."

"Oh, alright then. I'll take care of the leftovers Hiccup, you boys go have fun until your brother gets here." Stoick said, as he finished his last bite of pizza and headed over to the kitchen.

Realizing he hadn't even seen the time yet Hiccup glanced at the clock and was shocked and more then a little disappointed to see it was already eight thirty. Finished the last of their pizza Jack and Hiccup quickly the pair relocated to Hiccup's room.

"That was pretty impressive, getting yourself invited back like that." Hiccup commented as he hopped up on his bed. Jack smirked.

"Well i figured it be a good thing if your dad thought it was his idea. Sorry for just kinda inviting myself back though, I'm mean I assumed that you wouldn't mind but...I wasn't reading into thing to much was I?"

"No," Hiccup laughed, "I'm glad you'll be over again. I like having your around." He blushed a bit as he spoke, smiling at Jack who smiled back.

They spoke for a while about how much they were not looking forward to their impending return to classes and homework.

"If you'll excuse me, nature calls." Jack said after a bit, standing up and walked to the door "Its just right here you said-ah yeah here it is." Hiccup stared after Jack as he left (he totally had not been staring at Jack's rear), wishing that the night could just last forever.

As if to assert that Hiccup's wishes held no sway over the universe, the doorbell rang at that moment. Hiccup glanced at the clock, 9:02, and headed to the living room where he found his father opening the door for Aster.

"Trust he didn't give ya 'ny trouble?" Aster was saying As Hiccup entered the room.

"None at all." Stoick replied.

"Good, heya Hiccup." Aster waved "Where is Jack?"

"Bathroom." Hiccup answered, gesturing to the hallway where he could hear the bathroom door opening. Jack appeared in the opening a moment later.

"Hey Hiccu- Oh. Nine o'clock already?"

"Fraid so Jackie." Aster said. Jack walked over to the door, his shoulders slumped a bit. "Thank you for having me , and thank you for the invite back."

"My pleasure Jack, it was great to have you."

Hiccup "I'll-I...I think I left my phone in your room" Jack said as he patted both his pants pockets, and the large one of his hoodie. Jack gave a sheepish expression and Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Help me find it?"

"Come with me," Hiccup sighed as he turned back toward his room. Part of Hiccup wished Jack would just leave already, like ripping a band aid off quickly instead of dragging out like what was currently happening.

"Be right back." Jack said as he followed after Hiccup.

As Hiccup entered his room he looked at where Jack had been sitting and, seeing nothing on the floor or the desk, turned around to face Jack "Are you sure you left it in he-" Hiccup stopped speaking as he found Jack's face just a couple inches from his own. Closing the short distance Jack pressed his lips to Hiccup's, who kissed him back. He felt Jack's finger's brush lightly down his cheek until they hooked under his chin and angled his head, allowing Jack to deepen the kiss. Hiccup instinctually pressed himself close to Jack, his hands coming up to hold the other boy's waist lightly. After a moment Jack pulled away, his face still extremely close to Hiccup's. "You didn't actually leave your phone in here did you?" Hiccup asked breathlessly. Jack smirked.

"I wanted to give you a proper goodbye." Hiccup smiled back. Stepping away from one another they both took a moment to compose and adjust themselves before turning toward the door. Jack gave Hiccup one last quick peck on the lips and they made their way back into the living room. "Found it." Jack said triumphantly, holding up his phone.

"Right, let's get go'n then Jackie, Hiccup's got ta get ta bed 'n Koz is waitin' fer me at home."

"See you tomorrow Hiccup." Jack said quickly, stepping forward and wrapping one arm lightly around Hiccup for a second in what the freckled teen could only describe as a 'bro-hug' which Hiccup returned awkwardly. He waved as he and Aster turned and headed down the path and Stoick closed the door.

"Well Jack's certainly a friendly young man."

"Yeah, he certainly is." Hiccup said, hoping his response didn't sound as guarded as he feared it did.

"Remember same rules as usual when he's over. Do you want me to leave money for you two to get some dinner?"

"I am eighteen dad, I'm pretty sure I can fend for myself," Hiccup snapped.

"Right, of course." Stoick's reply was hard and Hiccup felt a bad for snapping like he had.

"Thanks for offering though dad." Stoick's voice was warmer when he replied.

"Course, now you should get off to bed, big day tomorrow."

"Yeah, night dad." Hiccup said, hesitating for a moment before giving his dad a quick hug, retreating toward his room to fast for Stoick to reciprocate.

"Night son." He heard from behind him as he closed the door.

"So I take it yer visit went well then?" Aster said after several minutes of driving in silence.

"Huh? How'd you know?"

"Well fer one you've been starin' out the window smilin' like 'n idiot for nearly ten minutes now. And fer two it took ya quite a while to find yer phone." Jack flushed.

"Was it that obvious?"

"I doubt Hiccup's dad noticed anythin' if thas what yer askin, I take it he's not aware a tha extent a yer friendship with Hiccup then?"

"Yeah," Jack sighed "Good job catching on like that."

"Well we've got a bit 'o practice playin' off eachother like that, but give me a heads up next time so I know what 'm walkin' inta."

"Yeah sorry about that."

"So obviously then ya've worked through yet confliction from lastnight?"

"Yeah, you 'n pitch were right I guess. I really like him and so I'm just gonna go with it for now and when he's more comfortable with everything we'll go from there." Aster nodded approvingly.

"How very mature of ya." He was silent for a moment "So ya kissed 'im then?" Jack half groaned half growled and rolled his eyes.

"Yes, obviously."

"And?"

"Aaaaaandâ€¦it was kinda amazing." Jack said, his smile evident in his voice as he thought back to kissing Hiccup. Aster laughed and ruffled Jack's hair affectionately.

"Aww my little brother's finally growin' up! So what's this about seein' 'm tomorrow?"

"Oh, well I got myself invited back to work on schoolwork since we'll both have quite a bit to make up."

"Well then I got some bad news fer ya Jackie." Jack looked at Aster, suddenly concerned. "Yer gonna have ta ask mom for a ride home tomorrow."

"Oh god, please don't make he subject him to that so soon."

"Ya know yer gonna have ta bring 'im round sooner er later."

"Yes, but I'd rather not open that can of worms just yet." Aster contemplated for a long time. "Please Aster?"

"Alright, I guess I can ferry ya around fer a bit longer."

"Thanks Aster."

"Yer welcome Jackie."

After getting dressed for bed, emerging from his room briefly to brush his teeth, Hiccup sat on his bed petting Toothless who had made a reappearance once the strangers had gone waiting until he heard his father's bedroom door close. Knowing that his father wouldn't be able to hear him Hiccup pulled out his phone and dialed.

"Oh my god what the hell took so long? I've been waiting for you to explain what the hell is going on all day!" Astrid was talking as soon as she answered the call.

"Hi Astrid, oh fine how about you? That's good to hear."

"Oh don't even give me that, after last night and then you just text me and tell me he's coming over all of a sudden. Dish. Now." Hiccup chuckled at her insistence, but she did have a point.

"Well Jack called me in the middle of the night and said he'd been an ass and asked if I wanted to hang out today and I obviously said yes. Turn out that his brother had some nasty stuff go down with a family member not being ok with the whole gay thing and it kinda scarred him, which is why he acted the way he did yesterday."

"Well thats no excuse for treating you the way he did."

"And I kinda said that, but let me finish my story! So my dad ended up getting called into work and I was showing him the basement and he challenged me to some video games. Of course I was kicking his ass and so he decided to cheat and tickle me, not sure how he knew I'd be ticklish but-

"You just have that look about you."

"I do not, now let me-

"Yes you do."

"Hush! Anyway, he was sorta pinning me down from the tickling and then he kissed me and-

"He kissed you!?"

"Yes, and Astrid, ah it was wonderful." Hiccup found himself lying there smiling like an idiot while Astrid made a very un-Astrid like noise.

"Ahh! I knew I was right when I told him about you!"

"That's not what you were saying last night." Hiccup was surprised he

was able to joke about the previous night, but the high he was currently on made that whole disastrous date seem like a thousand years ago.

"Oh hush. So what happened next?"

"Well, we kissed a few more times, and then we kinda fell asleep. I was exhausted since I didn't get almost any sleep last night, and he apparently was too cause I didn't wake up till my dad was coming downstairs, which wasn't good cause his arm was around me and-"

"You fell asleep with his arm around you? You know that adorable right?" Hiccup blushed.

"Go ahead and make your jokes, you interrupted before you found out if my dad caught us-"

"Right but if he had this would a very different conversation, so I didn't need you to say it."

"Fair enough. So after that we just had dinner, my dad bought a Pizza, and then he had to leave pretty quick after that."

"It sound like you had a great day then huh?"

"It may have been the best day of my life." Hiccup said, not even caring how stupid he knew he sounded.

"I'm really glad you're happy Hiccup." Astrid said. Hiccup thought about that. He was happy-without the sense of impending doom that had accompanied his happiness for many months-which was a pretty novel feeling at this point. "So do you have plans to see him again?"

"Yeah he's actually coming over tomorrow to work on the homework were going to have to make up."

"Really? Maybe I'll come over after practice and say hi." Hiccup was a tiny bit nervous over the mischievous tone in her voice, but decided not to worry about it at the moment.

"That-yaaaaaawwn-that would be fine. Would be nice to see you."

"Hey don't-yaaaaawwn-don't do that." Astrid laughed and Hiccup joined her. "I really am glad your happy Hiccup."

"I know, I am too. Its nice."

"Alright, I'll let you sleep, I could use some sleep myself. I'll see you tomorrow Hiccup."

"See you tomorrow Astrid, night."

"Night Hiccup."

Hiccup hung up the phone and replayed the events of the day in his head until he fell sleep, which took no time at all.

11. Chapter 11

****Hello everyone, I've got some announcements to make! First of all, I am in fact still alive! I've had a very intense semester on top of some major changes in my life that took away most of my free time and left me with little motivation during the free time that I did have. Things have finally settled down to what I would call 'stable' and I've been able to start writing again! This brings me to announcement number two; starting tomorrow I will be posting up new writing every other Monday (and for the foreseeable future this will mean new chapters of Guardian)! I'd like to do every Monday but I've got another pretty crazy schedule next semester (mostly since I will be taking my senior seminar next semester) as I'm approaching graduation so I don't think every week will be feasible. I want to give a special thank you to everyone who has left comments and reviews on all my work during this rather extended downtime and to promise that it won't be happening again! Every single one of you reading this is awesome and I love you all. Here's to an awesome (and productive!) 2015!****

Hiccup awoke breathing hard, his hair plastered to his head, wet lines ran from the corners of his eyes down the sides of his face onto his pillow. The too familiar images of his nightmares rapidly fading from his mind left nothing behind but the usual sense of helplessness and guilt. He took several deep breaths and squeezed his eyes shut, drying them on his blanket. He tried to focus his mind on the coming day, which wasn't much help as he remembered that he was returning to school today. Yay. The faint light creeping into Hiccup's room through his blinds told him that trying to go back to sleep wasn't an option. He glanced over at his clock, 6:12; well at least he only beat his alarm up by eighteen minutes today. Usually when he woke up from a nightmare it was in the middle of the night which meant he was doomed to spend the rest of the night staring at the ceiling.

He stretched, tensing his entire body, except his right arm which wasn't as easy as it sounded, and gave a small yawn. Toothless jumped on his lap as he sat up and he scratched the cat behind his ears. "Hey bud, you seem pretty awake, how about you go to my classes today and I'll run around the house and hide my slippers, that sound good?" Toothless kneaded Hiccup's leg before curling up on his lap and closing his eyes, purring. "Good thought bud, but I don't think 'my cat was sleeping on my lap' counts as a valid excuse for not showing today." Sighing Hiccup pushed Toothless off his lap, much to the cat's displeasure, and forced himself to get out of bed. He moved through his usual morning routine on auto polite, the only part that required any effort was the re-bandaging of his arm which ended up causing a lot more trouble than he thought it would, requiring him to completely start over several times. As a result of the delay he was running later than he would have liked by the time he slipped his shirt on over the bandages. He would probably be on time for class, but he wouldn't have to skip breakfast.

His father was already gone for the day when Hiccup got downstairs, as was usual; however unlike usual there was a note taped to the front door. Hiccup grabbed it as he knelt down to slip his shoes on.

Hiccup, hope you are feeling better today. Hope school is ok, let me

know if you need anything. I'll bring home some takeout for everyone on my way home. See you tonight_

Love Dad.

Well that was unusual. His father seemed to be taking this whole "being there for him thing" seriously, at least for now. Hiccup wondered how long it would take for him to withdraw like he had before, and then he felt guilty for thinking that because his father was really was trying and a negative attitude wasn't going to help the situation any. Hiccup continued brooding as he slipped on a thin jacket, threw his backpack over his shoulder, and headed out the door pausing only to lock it behind him.

A weak Autumn sun was trying its hardest to shine through the overcast sky which lent a gray tint to the world as Hiccup made his way to school. The air was cool with that occasional gust of cold that promised winter was around the corner. All in all Hiccup rather enjoyed the walk, the fresh air was nice and it felt good to be out of the house after so long spent cooped up. Aware that he was running late Hiccup walked faster than he usually would, nearly breaking into a run as he approached the school. Even with his efforts he still arrived late which meant he would have to go in through the school's office entrance, something that he had hoped to avoid. He set his path toward the large arched entrance to the old building when, passing the entrance students used before the school day started, his attention was grabbed by frantic motion in one of the large windows next to the double doors. Doing a double take he saw a familiar shock of white hair; Jack was waving both his arms trying to get Hiccup's attention. With a quizzical look Hiccup walked over to the door which Jack opened for him.

"Good morning." Jack said with a smile.

"Morning," Hiccup returned the smile "shouldn't you be in class?"

"Yeah, but my class is just down the hall from here, plus the teacher is kind of used to me being late. Andâ€¦I hadn't heard from you yet today so I just wanted to be sure you made it okay." Jack looked a bit self conscious as he spoke but Hiccup just smiled. Part of him was aware of the potential for a stalker joke here, but he honestly found Jack's concern for him too sweet to make light of.

"I'm here now so you should probably get to class, and so should I." Hiccup said after a second of silence, aware that he still had to stop by the office to sign in as tardy.

"Yeah, I'll see you after school I guess?"

"Yeah, I'll meet you here and we can walk to my house together."

"Sounds good, have a good day Hiccup." Jack leaned in to peck Hiccup on the lips but Hiccup leaned away swiftly, looking left and right down the empty hallways. He bit his lower lip when he met Jack's slightly hurt expression.

"I'm sorry, Its just-" Hiccup started to explain hastily but Jack forestalled him with a wave of his hand.

"I know, its okay. I'll see you later Hiccup." Jack gave him a smile as he turned and headed down the hall to his class; Hiccup wasn't completely sure, but the smile seemed just a bit too wide. Hiccup shook his head in irritation as he headed to the front office. He would worry about whatever had just happened later, preferably after he'd slogged his way through the school day. He got a pleasant "welcome back" from the lady in the office when he got his tardy instead of her usual "Punctuality is important Mr. Haddock" which he guessed had something to do with the puffy white bandage just visible poking out of the right sleeve of his shirt. He hurried on his way with a mumbled "thanks" as he headed to his locker to load up on his books for the day and then rushed to his first class, chemistry II.

The teacher turned to the door as he slipped into the room, looking like he was about to make a comment about interrupting class when he paused and just said "Welcome back Mr. Haddock. Please take your seat, and see for a moment after class if you would."

"Yes Sir." Hiccup said, his cheek's flushing as the entire class turned to look at him while he nearly sprinted to his seat at the edge of class and sunk into it. To Hiccup's surprise he was actually able to follow along with the lessons pretty easily. There were some things that he didn't understand, but on the whole he was a lot less lost than he thought he would be and before he knew it the bell was ringing and the class began to shuffle out. He quickly made his way to the front of the room to talk to the teacher like he'd been asked.

"Welcome back Hiccup, I hope you're feeling better." He said as he walked over to his desk Hiccup following behind him. Not knowing how exactly to answer Hiccup remained silent and the teacher spoke again a moment later. "I know you only missed three days of class, but a lot of this beginning material is essential to understanding the material later in the semester so its understandable if you need some help catching up," he said with a sympathetic smile smile.

"It wasn't actually as bad as I was worried it would be," Hiccup replied truthfully "I was able to follow along today pretty well."

"That's good, of course you were always one of the better students. If you do find that you need help at all please come to me and I can meet with you to go over whatever confuses you or assign you a tutor to help for a bit."

"Thank you sir, I'll be sure to do that."

"Good. Then there's just the matter of the work you missed." Hiccup grimaced as he was handed a depressingly large packet of paper held together by one very overworked paper clip. "That's everything you missed. There is a quiz in there just fore review since I've already handed back graded versions it just won't be factored into your grade at all, but the rest of the assignments please try to get in as soon as you can. I expect you will have work from you other classes as well so just try to get this in within the next couple weeks, alright?"

"Of course sir, I'll do my best."

"I know you will. Be sure to focus on healing up too of course."

"Thank you Sir." Hiccup said as he put the make-up work into his backpack and hurried out the door to his next class.

Even with the delay in his previous class there was still a couple minutes left before class began as Hiccup approached the door to the art room, not that he was overly worried anyway; their art teacher Miss V was never on time for class. She was Hiccup's favorite teacher; sure she was a little bit out there, but then most art teachers were in Hiccup's experience. He saw that he was right as he entered the room, students filled most of the desks but Miss V was nowhere in sight as Hiccup took his usual seat off in the far corner of the room.

"Well look who it is!" Hiccup turned in his seat to look at Snotlout who was sitting a row back from him. Hiccup sighed; He had been quit dismayed at the start of the year to find out that he would be sharing this hour with Snotlout. They weren't actually in the same class, Hiccup was taking an independent art study this hour because he had run out of actual art classes to take while he assumed that Snotlout was taking the Art for Beginners class that actually met this hour because he needed something from the "The Arts" section of the course book to flesh out his schedule. At least that was why Astrid was taking the same course.

"Go away Snotlout." Hiccup mumbled as the large boy stood and walked over to him, a sneer on his face. Hiccup did feel a bit of satisfaction at the large angry purple bruise that covered most of his left cheek.

"I hear you actually managed to fail at offing yourself? I gotta say that's pretty impressive, even for you Fuckup!" Hiccup just sighed and rolled his eyes. He stared resolutely at the chalk stained blackboard. "Don't let it get you down though, after all you know what they say. If at first you don't succeed, try try aga-aaah!" his words were cut off by a choking sound. Hiccup spun around to see Astrid standing there holding Snotlout firmly in a headlock. She leaned her mouth close to Snotlout's face and hissed something that Hiccup couldn't hear but he was pretty sure he could guess the basics of it. Astrid had on that face of hers that terrified him and he genuinely almost felt bad for Snotlout. Almost. A couple of Snotlout's friends had stood from their seats when Astrid had grabbed him, however the confrontation was over before they could do anything as Snotlout nodded his head furiously and Astrid let him go. He retreated back to his desk in defeat and Hiccup found himself fighting the sudden urge to throw him a little wave, he resisted the temptation though as Astrid sat down in the desk closest to his.

"I really hate that guy." Astrid growled, anger still clear in her voice.

"Try not to let him get to you." Astrid hurumphed. "Just be glad that Miss V didn't see you."

"Oh yeah, cause she's such the disciplinarian."

"Fair enough."

"You get any make up work yet?"

"Ugh, yes. Take a look at this." Hiccup pulled out the packet from his chemistry class.

Astrid stuck out her tongue like a child being offered a vegetable "Yuck."

Hiccup nodded in agreement "Pray for me."

At that moment Miss V swept into the room and gave her customary greeting "So sorry I'm late children. Now if you would all take out the rough sketches you've been working on we will continue on them today. Remember were just exploring right now. If you do think you found something you would like to focus on for your first project let me know and we'll work it out. As usual let me know if you need help with anything." With that she walked over to the large 5 CD stereo system she had set up in the classroom and turned on some music for the class to listen to while they sketched. Then she turned her attention to Hiccup. "Oh it's so wonderful to have you back in class Hiccup! This class just hasn't been the same without you here." She gave him a rib-cracking squeeze before ducking into one of the doorways that led to the other interconnected art classrooms. She came back a minute later with the large lump of partially formed clay that Hiccup had been working in before. "I've been spraying it every day to be sure that it was ready for you when you got back." She said happily.

"Thanks Miss V, I'm glad I don't have to start over."

"Oh you know I'd lever let that happen! I'm just so happy your back," She said again, giving him another hug. "Let me know if you need anything dear." She said as she turned to do her usual walk around the room, peering over the shoulder's of nervous students and giving encouraging comments and bits of advice every once in a while.

The rest of the class passed uneventfully. Astrid and Hiccup chatted idly as they worked, Hiccup continuing to shape the lump of clay before him, Astrid trying to sketch out random object and cursing at the results. Occasionally Miss V would pass by them and comment on their work, always patting Hiccup lightly on the shoulder when she did so. Soon the music was shut off which marked the end of the working time in the class and, after a few minutes of cleaning up, the actual bell rang marking the end of the class. Hiccup and Astrid walked to their next class together which Hiccup was glad was study hall.

They sat in their usual corner and Hiccup broke out the packet of Chemistry work and started on it. He had to reference his book several times but by the end of the period he felt he had a pretty good grasp on the new idea, and he had finished two of the worksheets.

Their next class was Physics, which had Hiccup much more lost than Chemistry, but luckily Astrid was here this time and was able to whisper basic explanations that kept him on track enough that the class wasn't a total waste. Like in his Chemistry class Hiccup was called to the teacher's desk at the end of the class where he was welcomed back and given a packed of work even larger than the

previous and asked to complete it as he could, the sooner the better. Lunch was also uneventful as Astrid and Hiccup sat at their usual table, the other kids giving them even more space than usual. Astrid tried to bring up Jack but Hiccup silenced her with a "not here" and she respected that enough to let it go, at least for the time being.

Soon the bell was ringing and Astrid was off to English while Hiccup was off to his 'independent study for shop class' which was really just him following around the school's janitor/handy man Mr. Adder and helping him fix stuff when it broke. Hiccup enjoyed it though, it was fun getting to work with the various machinery that kept the school functioning properly, and he was good at it. He had always enjoyed working with his hands, and working with mechanical things in particular, so when he had exhausted the school's offered shop classes his junior year he had been afraid he would not be able to do anything in that field anymore. He had spoken to the school's academic adviser about it and having aced all his previous shop classes was able to work out setting up the independent study. There was not much that needed fixing today and so after welcoming him back and wishing 'his favorite helper' a quick recovery Mr. Adder gave him the period off. Hiccup again broke out his homework packet and had a couple more assignments done by the end of the period.

His last two classes followed the same general pattern, he was welcomed back and then given the assignments that he had missed while he was absent. The final bell rang and Hiccup hurried from the classroom after being given one more packet of make-up work. The day had gone just about how he had expected and while he definitely was not looking forward to getting home and starting on the depressing stack of papers currently tucked away in his backpack, there was one thing about going home that he very much was looking forward to though. He stopped by his locker briefly to drop off his English book since he had no intention on starting the English make-up work that night. Throwing the soul-crushing weight of his stuffed back pack over his shoulder Hiccup headed off to meet up with Jack.

(a note to my followers on A03 and Fanfiction, since these two services don't have options where I can set chapters to post in the future [at least not that I can find] the updates to these sites will probably be posted later (I'd guess around 10 am CST) than on my tumblr or deviant art accounts which will both post the new chapter at 12 am CST)

12. Chapter 12

Next chapter woo! I think this every other week thing is the perfect amount of time for me, not so frequent that I get stressed out but frequent enough that it keeps me writing most every day. As always thanks for any and all likes and shares, they really do make my day! Hope you enjoy, see ya'll next update!

When Hiccup arrived at the spot near the gym doors he and Jack had agreed on that morning the white haired teen was nowhere to be seen among the many students rushing to freedom and so Hiccup was left to stand awkwardly by the door and wait. Thankfully he didn't have to wait too long, only about five minutes after classes got out, before Jack arrived wearing one of the school's 'physical fitness uniforms' and a pair a basketball shorts carrying a gym bag over one shoulder.

Hiccup had always hated the uniforms which were basically numberless versions of the school's basketball jerseys tho he was suddenly finding that he minded them much less in this situation.

"Hey Hiccup!" Jack grinned as he came to a stop next to the shorter boy. "Sorry to keep you waiting, class went long. I didn't even have a chance to chance." He offered as explanation of the outfit that Hiccup realized he might have been staring at. Just a little.

"Oh, thats alright. What kept class late? I can't imagine somebody was still finishing their test."

"Heh, no the tie braking dodge ball match took a while." At a questioning look from Hiccup Jack excitedly launched into an explanation. "Alright well the class got split into two teams, obviously, and it was a pretty even split with skill. The kids who obviously didn't really want to be there got taken out pretty quick and thats when things got intense." Hiccup understood that, having been in the position of 'not wanting to be there' through out most of his own gym classes. "We ended up trading wins the entire class until we were tied near the end and obviously we couldn't leave it like that and so most of us decided to play one last game. It got pretty intense cause I'm kinda amazing at dodge ball and so I was a bit of a target. Not that they could hit me without like five of them all gunning for me at once."

"Shame I missed it then" Hiccup grinned, finding Jack's excitement contagious "so did your team win?" Jack's face fell a tad and he was about to respond when another voice cut him off.

"Nope, he got knocked out half way through the game by yours truly." Astrid said as she appeared in the doors that lead to the gym dressed in her practice jersey. Jack grimaced playfully.

"Yeah, Aster calls me competitive but I've got nothing on you, you're kinda scary when you want to win."

"Wait, the two of you were playing against each other? I really am sad I missed that."

"Yeah you missed quite the slaughter."

"I would hardly call it a slaughter! You-"

"I took you out four times, you only got me once and that was cause that girl with the pigtails got in my way, what would you call that?"

"I'd calling it going for other people on your team instead of just you."

"Well then that was just your fault, you always go for the biggest threats first thats just basic strategy."

"Since you were clearly going for me every time then that must mean I was the biggest threat on my team."

"Eh, not the most accurate but you're hard to hit I'll give you that." The two continued like this for a few minutes, debating who was better at dodge ball and who had been the bigger asset to their

team while Hiccup stood there listening and laughing until Astrid glanced at a clock hanging on the hallway wall. "I've got to get to practice, you going to be home later Hiccup?"

"Yeah I'll be there."

"Alright, might see you later then if I'm not to beat from practice." She smiled and turned back into the gym.

"Sooâ€|shall we go then, or do you want to change first?" Hiccup rocked back into his heels as he spoke.

"I'm good, the colds never really bothered me."

"Alright, lets go."

The walk to Hiccup's house was pleasant, the air still had a chill whenever they walked through a shadow, but the sun had dispelled it otherwise. Jack was a bit quite through the start of the walk and it was clear that there was something he wanted to say. After about a minute of solid silence and Jack not meeting Hiccup's eye he couldn't take it anymore. "What!?"

"What?" Jack finally met Hiccup's gaze and cocked his head, looking for all the world like a puppy that had been caught sneaking food from the table.

"You want to say something, and if you wait any longer _I'm_ going to explode."

"Oh, well uh, I just wanted to apologize for this morning. I know you said you weren't ready to come out too your dad and I guess I just didn't think that it would be a as big a thing at school and I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable or-" Jack was interrupted by a hand on his shoulder. Hiccup was smiling as he looked at Jack.

"Its fine Jack, just, no pda in public please." Jack looked at Hiccup for a second and then smiled.

"Alright."

"Soooâ€|how was your first day back?"

"Eh, about as good as could be expected really. I don't think I'm that far behind material wise, but I've got a huge stack of make up work to do."

"Yeah I've got a pretty big stack to slog through myself, which is gonna suck."

"Oh I guarantee you mine is bigger."

"I'd like to see you prove that." Jack's waggled his eyebrows and Hiccup blushed as he realized what he'd said.

"Oh grow up."

"If you keep talking like that I just might." Jack's suggestive look had Hiccup blushing even harder. After that Hiccup spent the rest of the walk making sure that nothing he said could be twisted by Jack

and Jack spent it doing his best to do so anyway and by the time they both walked through the front door of Hiccup's house Hiccup's blush had subsided significantly and his cheeks were beginning to hurt from smiling.

"Can I get you something to drink? Water, Soda?"

"Uh, water would be good."

"Alright." Hiccup went into the kitchen and grabbed a bottle of water for Jack and himself. Turing around Jack was nowhere to be found but his bedroom light was on so he assumed Jack had gone to set his stuff in there and Hiccup followed.

"One water for you s-" Hiccup's voice died in his throat as he stepped into the doorway and found Jack shirtless, fastening the button of a pair of jeans, a nice dressy shirt laid out on Hiccup's bed.

"Oh thanks. Sorry I was just changing real quick."

Oh that's alright Jack don't worry about it, here's that water you wanted-is what Hiccup said in his head. What came out of his mouth was a slightly dazed "Huh?" as he shook his head to clear it. Hiccup wasn't the type of person to go all googly eyed over someone being shirtless around him, but he hadn't been expecting it and, well, Jack certainly was very nice to look at. Apparently noticing Hiccup's sudden distraction Jack smirked and, deciding to press his advantage, sauntered toward him in a purposefully casual sort of way.

"You know, I don't think were in public right now."

Hiccup could only shake his head weakly as Jack drew closer, part of his brain too dumbstruck by the situation to process what was happening the other able to process if but unable to quite believe it. And then his brain kinda just stopped bothering all together as Jack's lips were pressed to his, an arm snaked its way around his waist while the other worked its way up to his head where its hand threaded through his hair. For their part Hiccup's hands were busy running up and down Jack's bare back.

It was several minutes later when Hiccup finally broke the contact, panting heavily as he leaned up onto his elbows from his bed which they had _somehow_ wound up on. Jack was lying next to him, his arm wrapped around Hiccup's waist and chest, their legs lying in a tangled mess.

"Hi." Jack said quietly as he cupped one of Hiccup's cheeks.

"Shhh," Hiccup put a finger to Jack's lips "I was having the most amazing dream."

"You weren't dreaming."

"I know, but it sure felt like it." Hiccup grinned as he leaned forward and pecked Jack on the lips. As he shifted his legs he could feel Jack's groin pressing against his leg mirroring the strain in his own pants. He kissed Jack again and then let out a regretful sigh "We should probably start on some make-up work so I've got _something_ to show my dad when he gets home." Jack raised his eyes

suggestively and Hiccup groaned "Something that won't get me thrown out of the house I mean."

Jack sighed as well as the pair untangled themselves and sat up "I guess, though I have to say I personally prefer the make-out work." He grinned as Hiccup groaned at his joke and retrieved his now very wrinkled shirt from where it had been crushed into the bed. He slipped it on and grabbed his gym bag while Hiccup grabbed his backpack. Soon they were making some headway on their work, Jack lying on his stomach on Hiccup's bed his work spread before him while Hiccup sat at his desk slogging through the rest of his biology work. It didn't help that his brain (and other parts of him as well) was far more interested in reliving the last—however long it had been, than the functions the various proteins served in the structure of a cell.

Hiccup was just finishing his last bit of make up work for Biology when Jack called his name. "Hiccup, did you get to the bit in the chemistry stuff about adding the chemical formulas?" Hiccup nodded. "What are you supposed to do with the subscripts and superscripts again?" Hiccup stood up and walked over to Jack, motioning for him to make room.

"Here I'll show you." Hiccup walked Jack through the process for the first few questions and then made him do it himself for the next couple. "There, you've got it." He said as he started to get up but Jack grabbed his shoulder and pulled him back down. >"Wait," he kissed Hiccup quickly "thanks." And then they were making out again much to Hiccup's surprise and the detriment of Jack's papers spread out on the bed underneath them.<p>

"Was that the door?" Hiccup asked breathlessly as he pulled away from Jack quite a while later.

"Hmm? No you're hearing things." Jack said as he pulled Hiccup back down into another kiss.

"Hiccup?!" Stoick's voice boomed out from the kitchen. Hiccup jumped up from his position lying on top of Jack, smoothing his shirt and adjusting the front of his pants as he raced back to his desk and took a seat, grabbing a pencil and staring intensely at the paper, not reading anything written there.

"Up here dad!" He called back. A few moments later the door opened to reveal Stoick blocking most all the doorway. Just as the door opened Jack let out an exasperated groan and dropped his head onto the slightly crushed papers he had hastily stacked before him.

"Ah here you are," Stoick glanced between Hiccup and Jack "You boys making any progress."

"Some." Hiccup replied, trying to keep the panic out of his voice. Jack made a sound somewhere between a growl and a groan which made Stoick chuckle.

"Well take a break, there's food downstairs."

"Alright thanks dad."

"Awesome, thanks Mr. Haddock!" Jack said excitedly as he lifted his head

up. "I totally need a break from this stuff or I'm gonna go insane." Stoick smiled as he turned and walked away; Hiccup let out a sigh of relief as he turned to Jack.

"You don't think he noticed the papers do you?" Jack asked, looking a little concerned "it didn't look like it but you know him better."

"What?"

"The crushed papers. I tried to explain it with the putting my head down on them thing but I don't know if that would work."

"I can guarantee you my dad didn't notice the papers were a bit crushed. You actually thought he would?"

Jack shrugged "My mom woulda."

"Your mom sounds a little scary." Jack laughed at that as he jumped off Hiccup's bed and headed for the door. He stopped near Hiccup and gestured to the door with a grandiose sweep of his arm and a bow of his head.

"Shall we good sir?" Hiccup laughed and nodded.

Stoick had purchased a large bucket of fried chicken with family sides of Mac n' Cheese, mashed potatoes and gravy, and coleslaw as well as a whole box of biscuits from a local restraint which was like one of those big fast food chains except the food was better. Hiccup wasn't a huge fan of their food because he wasn't a huge fan of fried food in general but it had been a long time since they'd last eaten there and so the food tasted pretty good. Jack seemed to love the food, helping himself to second of just about everything. The meal was going great, Stoick asked them about school and they both gave brief accounts of their day, Jack getting a good laugh with his retelling of the dodge ball match against Astrid, and complained about how much make up work they still had to get through. As the meal was wrapping down Stoick switched on the news

"making Arizona the 32th state to join the growing majority in allowing same-sex marriage. Which state will be next? Only time will join us at six for a look at just what is going on down at your local mortician's office." Hiccup froze at the news caster's voice trailed off into a commercial. Stoick made a gruff noise.

"What's this world coming to I swear."

"What do you mean?" Hiccup's gaze snapped to Jack when he heard him speak, his face a mixture of shock and anger.

"That," Stoick gestured to the TV vaguely

"Oh? And what's wrong with it exactly." Jack asked, his voice somewhere between genuinely curious and incredulous. Stoick fixed his gaze on Jack for a moment before speaking.

"Don't go thinking I'm some kind of close minded bigot or anything. If that's what they want to get up to in their free time then that's on them, but why do they have to make such a fuss about it for the rest of us? It's just not natural and letting them do this just makes

people think it is. If we were not careful we'll have little kids thinking it's normal and wanting to be like that."

Maybe it was the burning look Hiccup was giving him, or maybe he just thought better of it himself, but Jack seemed to bite off whatever he was going to say and instead just gave a noncommittal grunt and soon the conversation had changed to one about the local sports team which was mostly Stoick making comments while the boys glanced at each other frequently, both looking irritated and flustered with just a bit of anger. It wasn't long before Hiccup stood and excused them both pleading homework promising to do the dishes before he went to bed which Stoick said not to worry as he switched the TV to a football game.

"What was that?!" Hiccup hissed as soon as he closed the door to his room before him.

"I know, I'm sorry it's just" Jack rubbed his hands down his face in exasperation "I didn't realize just how programmed I am to go off whenever I hear someone spouting that kind of inane crap."

"I know he can be difficult some-"

"_Difficult?! _Doing algebra is _difficult_, parallel parking is _difficult_. What he is doing is judging and condemning an entire subset of people he knows absolutely about based on his own outdated and provably false views. He-"

"I know."

"And you're his son and he's-"

"I know."

"I mean how can you just sit there while he-"

"I KNOW JACK!" Hiccup was breathing heavily, his hands held out in front of him like claws. "I know, ok? Now you see why I can't come out to him?" Jack gave a deep sigh and walked over to Hiccup, tentatively wrapping him in a hug and, when he didn't object, squeezing him harder.

"I'm so sorry, I really am I justâ€¦"

"I know." Hiccup said it quietly this time. They were both quite as Hiccup's breathing settled down into a more relaxed pace. When they had both calmed down Jack gave a single chuckle.

"Plus I think I got a bit extra defensive hearing someone talk about my boyfriend like that." Hiccup froze at the word, a little warm patch replacing the dull clenching in his chest.

"Boyfriend?"

"I'm sorry, was that too presumptuous? I mean I didn't mean to just assume I

Just-" Jack rambled until Hiccup cut him off.

"Yes."

"Huh?"

"Yes I will be your boyfriend." Jack's smile was nearly as big as Hiccup's as he leaned down and kissed his boyfriend.

13. Chapter 13

****New chapter! This ones a shorter than I wanted because I ended up cutting it off of the front end of what is now chapter 14 because it was getting pretty long and I wasn't going to finish it in time. So wooo long chapter next time! Hope everyone enjoys this one and as always thank so much for all the favs and comments, they really do make my day when I get them ^^****

"You get to the question about the three legged squirrel yet?" Jack hadn't, he hadn't made much progress at all since they came up to the room, his mind taking turns being distracted by by warm fuzzy thoughts of Hiccup saying 'yes I'll be your boyfriend' and the much less pleasant thoughts about Hiccup's dad's reaction to the news story during dinner. He really hadn't meant to get rilled up then, but Hiccup's dad's comments had blindsided him. He hadn't thought that hiding his relationship with Hiccup would mean having to listen to that sort of crap and bite his tongue, which he felt silly now for not realizing. Of course he should have expected to hear stuff like that, maybe not quite to soon after meeting the man, but Hiccup was a smart guy and so if he didn't want his dad to know about him then obviously there was a reason.

"No but don't spoil anything, it sounds like a good one."

"Oh I wouldn't dream of ruining the surprise. Let me know when you get there, I'm not sure if my answer actually answers what the teacher is looking for or if was a bit too abstract."

"Don't go confusing the teacher now Hiccup, most of them don't take kindly to being shown up by a student."

"Oh psh, I doubt he would care but I'd rather not get marked off cause I got too existential if all he was looking for was 'it will probably die'."

"I don't think I've ever met someone who puts this much thought into homework."

"I'll be you've never met an A+ either then."

"Ouch, harsh dude."

"Hey, you get out what you put in-and don't turn that into something dirty!" Hiccup amended his statement after seeing the sudden mischievous look on Jack's face.

"You're no fun."

"I'm lost of fun, of have you forgotten?" Hiccup winked as he spoke.

"Mr. Haddock I do believe you just made a dirty joke! Someone alert

the papers." Hiccup put on the haughtiest voice he could.

"Just because my sense of humor is more refined doesn't mean I can't lower myself on occasion."

"Wowâ€|ass." Jack crumpled up one of the pieces of paper he had been using for scratch work and threw it at Hiccup, hitting him in the back of the head. Hiccup spun around in his chair to face Jack.

"Did you just throw something at me?"

"No." Jack gave Hiccup a puppy dog look which didn't soften Hiccup's expression one bit."

"You liar! You'll pay for that!" Without further warning Hiccup lunged out of his chair and launched himself at Jack, sending both of them sprawling into a tangled mass on the bed. "It's rude to throw things Jack!" Hiccup said as he grabbed a pillow and started hitting Jack with it playfully.

"You just threw yourself at me!" Jack tried to grab the pillow but Hiccup was able to keep it from him.

"Oh, are you complaining?" Hiccup leaned down and kissed Jack.

"No, no not at all." Jack said quickly when they broke apart, faces hovering inches apart. Hiccup smiled.

"Good answer."

They remained occupied like that until Jack had to start packing up his stuff to head home, which he did with great reluctance. He was just packing the last of his papers into his gym bag when the doorbell rang.

Jack pulled Hiccup close to him resting his forehead against the other boy's. "I'll see you after school tomorrow?"

"Yeah, as long as you want to come over."

"Nowhere else I'd rather be." Jack leaned down and kissed Hiccup quickly as they heard sound of the basement door opening and Hiccup's dad's voice boomed through the house.

"Boys! Jack's rides here!"

"I'll miss you."

"I'll miss you too." One last kiss and then the pair headed down to the living room arriving just as the door was opened to reveal not Aster standing there, but Jack's mom.

"Hello, you must be Hiccup's father," She said brightly, grabbing the large man's hand and shaking it while he looked at her in confusion. Jack's own mind was racing with a combination of shock and horror at his mom's unexpected appearance.

"Uh, yes I am. Name's Stoick, it's nice to meet youâ€|" Stoick trailed off questioningly and filled in the silence.

"Oh so sorry, Anna North, nice to meet you too Mr. Haddock.

"I assume you're here for Jack? He never mentioned having a sister before." Anna laughed brightly and put a hand to her chest.

"Oh, you are too kind Mr. Haddock. I'm Jack's mother."

"Oh."

"Yes, this happen sometimes, thought I promise you I'm not as young as I look." She laughed again which broke the slight awkwardness that was building in the room. "And you must be Hiccup." She practically trilled as she glided up to a frozen Hiccup and hugged him. "Its so wonderful to finally meet Jack's--"

"My new friend!" Jack said quickly, cutting off his mother before she could inadvertently blow their cover "Mom always insists on meeting my friends like I was still seven."

"As any good parent would, you never know what kids might be exposed to." Hiccup's dad said, appearing to have recovered himself.

"Right," Anna hesitated for a moment before pushing on "well you've been so nice letting Jack come over this week and so I'd like to invite Hiccup over to our house this weekend."

"Oh, well I suppose, if he is feeling up to it." Stoick said but hesitantly, looking at Hiccup for some sort of a cue. Misinterpreting his hesitation Anna continued.

"They'd be supervised of course, and Hiccup can stay in one of the spare rooms if-". Jack was near openly panicking at this point, trying hard not to outright yell as he cut his mother off.

"Mom Hiccup just got back from the hospital, how about we wait to see how he's felling later in the week?"

"Oh of course, I didn't mean to--"

"I know mom, but its getting late and Hiccup's really should get his rest, right Hiccup?" Picking up on the cue Hiccup gave a very convincing yawn. "See? We should really get going. I'll see you tomorrow Hiccup, Mr. Haddock."

"Night Jack." Hiccup said weakly.

"Oh, uh, yes goodnight Jack, see you later. It was nice to meet you Mrs. North."

"Nice to meet you too Mr. Haddock, we'll talk later. Goodnight." Anna said while Jack did everything short of actually shoving to get her out of the house. He closed the door behind them and rushed her to the car with an arm thrown over her shoulder, not stopping until he closed the car door behind her. As soon as Jack circled the car and got in she turned on him and hissed "What was that Jack!"

"Mom I am so sorry but I had to get you out of there."

"Why on earth did you have to get me out of there? If you pulled a

stunt like that because you thought I was going to embarrass you Jack so help me I will sell you car and drive you every you go until the day I die!"

"Hiccup's dad doesn't know that me and him are more than friends mom. He doesn't know Hiccup is gay and I he can't find out." Anna stared at Jack in silence for a moment before shouting.

"Why the hell doesn't anyone tell me these things?" She ran her hands down her face in exasperation "This is the kind of thing you tell someone before they walk into a situation like this!"

"Well I didn't know that you were going to be walking into this situation, Aster was supposed to be picking me up. I have no idea why he decided not to tell you if he was going to ask you to get me instead but I'm gonna kill him."

"Wellâ€¦he didn't actually ask me."

"Then, why-"

"He must have asked your father because he left a note on the board reminding him not to forget, and of course he was busy in his workshop and so I thought I'd come get you and take the opportunity to see you and meet Hiccup at the same time, since, you know, you haven't really been around for the last week." Jack's adrenalin had flagged enough for him to feel a little bad for having pretty much ignored his mom and dad since having gone out on his date.

"Sorry about that Mom, I guess I've just been busy."

"Its fine Jack, and I'm sorry for nearly letting the cat out of the bag."

"Its alright, no harm done I don't think. That could have been really bad though so please remember in the future ok?"

"Of course Jack, although are you sure its as bad as you say? You don't think Hiccup just talking to his dad openly would solve it?" Jack gave a bitter laugh.

"Oh I doubt it, he dad was pretty bad today."

"What? Wait does he know about you then? Did he say something to you Jack because I swear if he did-"

"No Mom, you can put the mamabear claws away. There was just this news story that came on TV about another state legalizing gay marriage and he commented on it."

"How bad?"

"Umm, well not quite as bad as Mr. Pitchiner."

"Dang. Now I feel really bad for Hiccup."

"Me too mom. I don't know how I could just stand there and listen to my parent talking about me like that. Thanks for being so awesome." Anna chuckled.

"I love you Jack, and so does your father and we always will, you know that."

"I know, just being there for thatâ€¦I knew there are people out there that would disown their kid for being gay, but it was different seeing it. Like how you know that sharks are real, but you don't really get what that means until you see one."

"Well Hiccup is welcome to come over this weekend like I said, or whenever he wants, if he wants a break from that sort of thing."

"I'll give him the invitation again when I see him tomorrow, and apologize to him for you."

"Alright just let me know if he's going to be coming over by Thursday so I can be sure to pick of something nice to make for dinner."

"You're going to cook? I like him mom please don't kill him."

"Don't be mean Jack."

"What would you call subjecting him to your cooking?"

"Watch it young man" Anna said in a falsely stern voice "besidesâ€¦I was going to ask Pitch to cook something." Jack laughed as the last of his stress from earlier faded.

"I love you mom."

"I love you too dear. Now lets get home before it gets to late, you've still got school tomorrow."

14. Chapter 14

****Just cause things are going well doesn't mean that old issues have just disappeared.****

****Sorry this isn't the extra long chapter I'd mentioned. I'm on the 3rd rewrite of the ending of this chapter because it just doesn't want to seem right. So here is the most logical place I could find to break the chapter into two. As always I hope you enjoy this chapter and tanks for all the Kudos and Comments, I love getting each and every one of them!****

Hiccup excused himself to his room soon after Jack left, both because his nerves were shot after Mrs. North's sudden appearance and because he really was tired. He pulled out his phone to text Jack as soon as he got to his room and found a message from Jack already waiting for him.

_Jack:): _I am *so* sorry!

Hiccup: You better be! That was way to close- *_delete delete delete*_ _Its ok, no harm done. That was way to close thought Jack.

_Jack:): _I know, I already brought my mom up to speed and I'll make

sure everyone is briefed before I go to sleep.

_Hiccup: _Alright. Thanks Jack :) Near disaster aside I had a really great time today.

_Jack:): _Me too Hiccup :) I always enjoy spending time with you.

_Hiccup: _You going to be coming over tomorrow after school?

_Jack:): _As long as you'll have me

Hiccup: Of course! You know it sounds weird to say since I've only known you for a couple weeks but it feels normal having you around. Like usually when I'm around people I don't really know it feels kind of awkward but with you it doesn't feel like that. Is that weird?

_Jack:): _No it not weird, its incredibly sweet :)

_Hiccup: _Ugh, don't do that Jack you'll make me blush

_Jack:): _Good, your cute when you blush :P Well, your always cute but especially when you're blushing.

_Hiccup: _You're crazy

_Jack:): _Crazy for you ;P

Jack:): Oh hey, so I promised my mom that I'd invite you over this weekend if you wanted to come over.

_Jack:): _Its totally cool if you don't want to or your don't feel up to it or you aren't comfortable with that yet.

_Jack:): _Hiccup?

Hiccup: Sorry I dozed off. Sure, I'd love too meet the rest of you're family.

Jack:): -.-â€| No see you were supposed to pick one of those reasons to say no and then I'd show my mom the text and she'd drop it for a bit.

_Hiccup: _â€|do you not want me to come over?

Jack:): Its just that my family can be a bitâ€|much sometimes.

Hiccup: If you didn't want me to come over Jack you could have just not invited me.

_Jack:): _What? No thats not what I mean! I'd love to have you over Hiccup, I just didn't really want to subject you to my family yet. I don't want to scare you away.

Hiccup: You ass! Don't scare me like that.

_Jack:): _Sorry, that was my bad I'll work on being more

clear.

Hiccup: Good. Now I'm going to go to say goodnight before I just fall asleep. Tell your mom I'd love to visit this weekend.

_Jack:): _Alright if you're sure your ready for that.

_Hiccup: _I'm sure. Goodnight Jack :) Can't wait to see you tomorrow.

_Jack:): _Night Hiccup :) I'm counting the hours until we meet again!

_Hiccup: _lol you sap :P *kiss*

Jack:): ;P *kiss*

Hiccup found himself feeling cautiously optimistic about things over the next couple days. School was as it pretty much had always been for Hiccup, he paid attention in class as best he could and tried not to draw too much attention to himself. The only change he noticed was in the teacher's behavior toward him which pretty much just meant that they were more lenient with him which he wasn't about to complain about. Snotlout was pretty easy to avoid most of the time and the fear of what Astrid would do to him was enough to keep him from doing more than glare the few times Hiccup did encounter him. He was even making good progress on his make up work (considerably more than Jack seemed to be making at any rate) and hoped to be finished with it before his trip to Jack's house on Friday.

Outside of school Hiccup found himself considerably happier than he had been in months, a fact that he mostly attributed to Jack's regular presence at his house and it didn't take them long to fall into a comfortable habit. They would head to Hiccup's room as soon as they got home and start working on whatever schoolwork they had and without fail something would happen that led to them kissing, not that Hiccup was complaining about that. He had always wondered what the big appeal of making out was. Sure kissing was romantic and all that, but he'd imagined that just lying there making out for who knows how long would get boring pretty fast. He was pleased to be proven wrong. In fact Hiccup had come to find it so engaging that he'd nearly missed the sound of his father coming into the house which had inspired quite the fear based adrenalin rush.

Once Stoick was back the pair were much more careful about their interactions; something that Hiccup could tell Jack disliked but Hiccup knew he understood the necessity for it after his father's speech on Monday. Stoick had taken to bringing home some kind of take out every night, calling to ask Hiccup what he and Jack would like whenever the restaurant offered a big enough selection. After dinner they would usually talk with Stoick for a few minutes until they were able to escape to Hiccup's room without being rude. The evenings were usually reserved for actually working on homework. That was how Hiccup's week progressed up until Thursday night.

The day had been good, Hiccup had managed to finish his physic make up work which left him with just English which he was confident he could finish over the weekend. He and Jack had spent a while debating (with a few raised voices) about their favorite episode of _Avatar: The Last Airbender_ and then had Mexican food with Stoick. Anna had

made another appearance, now apparently having been appropriately briefed by Jack about the situation, and extended her invitation to Hiccup which he had accepted. It had been a very good day; right up until he went to sleep.

Rain hammered against Hiccup's bedroom window. He was sitting on his bed with his legs crossed looking at a Hiccup who was sitting in his desk chair. His mother sat next to him and stared at the other Hiccup, her expression unreadable. The other Hiccup's face was much more forthcoming; anger and hurt clear upon it. "I can't believe you would say that after everything I just said! No, actually scratch that yes I can. God, I should have expected this I don't know why I thought this would go any other way." Hiccup could hear himself shouting, his voice straining with anger and suppressed tears. He tried to tell himself to shut up but he couldn't talk, as usual.

"Hiccup please, that not what I meant! Just please listen to me for a minute I-" His mother's voice sounded just as desperate as he remembered it, and it stabbed through his chest like an icicle just like it always did.

"About what? About how your siding with him, about how you don't want me to be happy? I thought you were supposed to love me no matter what, thats what _good_ mother's do, right?" Hiccup covered his ears but he couldn't block out his own voice. He tried to shout, to cover his hateful words but the rang through his ears, loud and absolute.

"Hiccup how could you-of course I love you Hiccup you're my son. I _do_ love you no matter what thats not what I was saying! Please just-"

"Yeah, whatever." The door slammed shut, the boom echoing with a ringing finality.

Hiccup let out a gasp as he woke up that turned into a choked sob as he tried to orient himself. He was in his room, but there was no rain, no second Hiccup, and certainly, no mother. Fresh tears coated his cheeks and he had to choke back another sob. It had been several weeks since his nightmare had been that clear. His own words still rung in his head and he bit his lip to keep himself from dissolving into total hysterics. He hadn't felt this bad since—since that night last month when he'd decided to end it all. The pain brought back all those old memories, but now there were new ones too, memories Hiccup had done everything he could to not think about for the last couple weeks. Memories of how peaceful he'd felt as he was lying on the bathroom floor, his head pleasantly foggy while warmth spread from his arm down his pant leg promising that soon, so very soon, all this pain would be over.

"No Hiccup," he whispered to himself "don't think like that. You already tried that and it didn't work, don't go down that road again." He words sounded hollow, even to himself. He was fighting a losing battle with his mind he he knew it. Not knowing what to do but knowing that he needed someone right then Hiccup picked up his phone intending to call Astrid. Thats what he say Jack's goodnight text on the screen and without thinking hit the call button.

The phone rang several times before Jack answered. "Mmhello?" It was

clear from the groggy tone in his voice that he'd been asleep but for Hiccup it was possibly the best sound he'd ever heard.

"Uh, hi Jack. S-sorry for, for waking you up." His voice shoot and quavered as he fought not to cry.

"Hiccup, are you alright?" Jack's voice sounded more alert when he spoke again.

"Oh yeah, I'm f-f-fine."

"Hiccupâ€|" Jack's voice was incredulous and Hiccup knew he wasn't buying it for a second.

"Okay actually no I'm really not okay at all."

"Whats wrong?"

"I had a reoccurring nightmare and it-it-it got me thinking about all those things from whenâ€|well you know."

"Oh Hiccupâ€|do you want me to come over? I can be there in twenty minutes, maybe less." Hiccup wanted more than anything at that moment to say yes. The thought of Jack's arms wrapped around him at that moment was the best thing he could imagine.

"Heh, I would love that but its not a good idea. If my dad-

"Screw your dad! Hiccup if you're you might have a repeat-" There was an unexpected swell of warmth in Hiccup's chest at Jack words pushing away some of the icy chill left by the nightmare.

"No it's not that Jack, its not that bad its justâ€|it brought me back to that place again."

"Are you sure Hiccup because I can make something up to trick your dad if you need me, or I can sneak in through your window, or-

"I'm sure Jack, honesty just talking to you right now it helping a lot." It wasn't a lie either. The tightness in his chest was fading as he felt himself starting to relax.

"Alright, thats good. Do you want to talk about the dream at all?"

"Not really, its just nice to talk."

"Well I do love talking to you, so whats new then?"

"You mean since you left-white time is it?"

"It's two."

"So five hours ago then?"

"Yeah, whats new?"

"I had a nightmare, but I think we covered that. Whats new with you?"

"Oh all sorts of stuff, lets seeeeeeeeâ€|well I think Aster is planning something for this weekend. I caught him in my room when I got home and he was being all shady and sneaky and stuff."

"Oh? What kind of something?"

"No idea but I can be sure that it will be embarrassing if he pulls it off. I looked all around my room but I couldn't find anything out of place or missing."

"Does he do that sort of thing often?"

"What mess with me? Oh yeah. Well maybe not quite as much since he's been with Pitch since now they have each other to torment but he's still done some pretty evil things in recent memory."

"Like what?"

"Let's see ummm. Okay so you know that thing where you put plastic wrap over the top of someone's toilet?"

"Oh my god he did that to you?"

"Yes and let me tell you that that is not a prank, that is pure evil. Thank god I was only going pee." Hiccup chuckled.

"That does sound pretty terrible."

"Oh it was. I got him back though."

"How'd you manage that?"

"Well my mom makes these really amazing chocolate covered strawberry things where the berry is completely covered by the chocolate right? And Aster really loves them, like, a lot. So one say when she was making them and I know she was I borrowed some of the chocolate and made my own version. Then I hid the real ones before Aster got home and replaced them with mine."

"What was in yours?" Hiccup could piratically hear the Jack's triumphant mysterious grin as he answered.

"Onions!"

"That is awful!"

"I know! He was _sooo_ pissed! Dad and Pitch thought it was hilarious, mom was a little peeved cause at first she thought Aster was gagging over one of her treats."

"So did Aster retaliate?"

"Oh yeah heâ€|"

Hiccup listened to Jack recount what was basically ongoing prank war between him and his adoptive brother for the better part of an hour before stopping him.

"Remind me to never give you the phone number of anyone important then."

"Oh he totally deserved it, besides that was no where near as bad as the time he-"

"He Jack, as much as I would love to hear another way in which you and Aster tormented each other, it's really late and I should let you get to bed."

"Are you sure? Because I'm fine, I could say up all night."

"I'm alright now Jack, thanks to you."

"Oh I didn't do anything I-"

"Yes you did Jack. Thank you." Jack was quiet for just a second.

"Your welcome Hiccup, I'm really glad you called me and remember, you can call me anytime that for anything, alright?"

"I know Jack."

"Because I'll be here for you no matter what Hiccup."

Hiccup didn't really know how to respond to that so he just said "Thanks Jack."

"Any time Hiccup."

"We really should get to sleep, we've got school tomorrow, and it sound like I'm going to need my rest to avoid any crossfire between you and your brother."

"Oh Aster knows that you are off limits, at least for now."

"Thats encouraging. We should get to sleep though."

"I know, you're right."

"Goodnight Jack, I'll see you tomorrow."

"I can hardly wait, Goodnight Hiccup."

Hiccup hung up the phone with a smile on his face, feeling like he might actually be able to sleep through the rest of the night.

15. Chapter 15

****Surprise! Bet you weren't expecting to see this until next week! Well, since I know I won't have the time to work on any of the prompts the way I would want to, my contribution to HiJack March Madness this year is going to be switching to a weekly release schedule for Guardian for this month! Woohoo! That also means that I will be releasing on the Sunday free days (probably very late, but still Sunday dangit!).****

****As always thanks so much to everyone who lies, favs, follows, comments on, reblogs, gives kudos for, or in any way shows how much they like this story, they all mean so much to me! Now that that is**

out of the way, on to the chapter! Enjoy! **

Hiccup felt groggy when he awoke Friday morning, a side effect of having woken up in the middle of the night that made it more difficult to crawl out of bed than usual but he managed and was soon feeling a bit more awake. Soon he was heading to school, the small overnight bag he had packed slung over his shoulder next to his backpack. He arrived at school just in time to duck in before the bell rang and give Jack a discreet little wave as he was walking into the gym. It was more difficult than usual for him to concentrate on his classes, his brain was much more interested in thinking about after school than chemistry. He was nervous to meet Jack's family of course, but he was also excited. He'd met Aster and Anna already, at least kind of, and of course he knew Jack so he's already met more than half of them. He was also looking forward to meeting Jack's mysterious father who was able to give his kid hundreds of dollars to blow on a date. Jack had proven unwilling to go into detail about his father the one time he'd brought it up when they had been working on their homework the previous day.

Apparently his preoccupation was enough that Astrid noticed it during their Art class because she launched into interrogation mode as soon as their lunch trays hit their table.

"Alright Hiccup, what's up?"

"Hmm? What do you mean?"

"I mean you've been barely paying attention to me or flat out ignoring me the entire class and now your looking out the window wistfully."

"When was I looking out the window wistfully?"

"At least three times during class."

"I don't think-"

"Yes, you were."

"Are|really?"

"Really."

"Damn I'm kinda ashamed now." Hiccup looked down in overexerted shame.

"That is pretty clichÃ©." Astrid nodded solemnly and patted Hiccup on the shoulder. "However I'm pretty sure it means that you're happy, so its excused." Hiccup grinned as he responded.

"That is true."

"So what exactly has you in such a good mood today?"

"What makes you think that there is anything special today?"

"Because you weren't all dreamy yesterday so you might as well just tell me." Hiccup sighed. It wasn't that he didn't want to tell Astrid

about going to Jack's house, he just hadn't really found a way to work it into the conversation also not really talking about it was definitely helping him not be as worried about it.

"You know sometimes I hate that you know me so well."

"I know. Now spill." Hiccup told Astrid about the near miss with Anna and her subsequent invitation. When he was done Astrid had a slightly worrisome smirk on her face.

"What's that look about?" Astrid looked away innocently before answering.

"Sooo, where exactly are you going to be sleeping tonight?" Hiccup looked at her quizzically.

"Jack's mom said that they had a spare room-"

"Sure, in front of his dad."

"What are you getting at Astrid?"

"Oh nothingâ€¦|so how big do you think Jack's bed is?" Astrid's innocent tone and her refusal to look at Hiccup made it perfectly clear what she was insinuating and Hiccup's stomach immediately twisted into a knot.

"You don't actually think heâ€¦|I mean its not that I wouldn't-but we've known each other less then a month!"

"I don't know Hiccup but I know what I would think if I was spending the night at a boyfriend's house."

"Oh God Astrid what if he actually does-I don't think I-No I know I'm not-Astrid what if-"

"Whoa whoa Hiccup I was just messing with you, calm down." Clearly Astrid hadn't realized the effect her words would have on Hiccup who was now breathing quickly, his eyes wider than usual.

"So then you don't think he would expectâ€¦|?"

"No, I know he wouldn't Hiccup. Besides if he did I'd kick his ass for you, if you wanted me to of course."

"You're a bastard."

"I know. Why are you so freaked out though?" Hiccup had to think on that for a minute before he could give any sort of answer.

"I'm not really sure, I mean I guess I knew that it would come up sooner or later, but I'd never really thought about it, at least not in any practical way. I think part of me is still expecting to wake up, or for something to go terribly wrong, so I've not really been letting myself think to far ahead of everything."

"Well you know thatâ€¦|that, is usually kind of important for a relationship?"

"Of course I do its justâ€¦|I don't think I'm ready for something like

that yet. I like" Hiccup glanced around to make sure nobody was within earshot or paying attention to their conversation "him, but I don't think I'm there yet."

"Then if it comes up at all, which I doubt it will, just tell him that."

"But what if he is expectingâ€|you know?"

"Then you tell him you're not ready. I admit I haven't spent all that much time with him but he seems like a good guy so I'm sure he'd be okay with that, and if he's not then he is in need of a serious ass kicking which, like I said before, I'd be happy to provide."

"Yeah I guessâ€|"

Hiccup tried his best not to let Astrid's joke get to him, but she had set his mind down a path that it refused to let up from. Sitting in class the rest of the day he often found his mind wandering to scenes of him and Jack lying in a bed that changed sizes each time looking at Jack's disappointed or hurt or angry face while he tried to explain that just wasn't ready for sex yet. Those thoughts, combined with the fact that he missed almost everything that was discussed in his after lunch classes, which led to a couple awkward moments when a teacher asked him a question expecting the correct answer like usual only to get a moment of silence and a muttered apology, had left Hiccup's nerves feeling a tad frayed by the time he met of up with Jack at the usual spot.

"Hey Hiccup! How was your day?" Jack was already waiting by the door when Hiccup arrived.

"Hey Jack, it was fine. At least as fine as school can be." Hiccup tried to push the thoughts from earlier out of his mind as the pair headed out of the school to wait for their ride. There appeared to be a bit of a commotion going on in the parking lot when they broke free of the throngs of students pouring from the school. "What's going on over there?" Hiccup wondered as the pair drifted over to a large group of kids staring at something in the parking lot and whispering to each other in hushed voices.

"I swear it is, I've seen pictures."

"I've never seen one in person before."

"Of course you haven't, you have any idea what one of those costs?"

"Wonder who it belongs too."

"Probably the dude in the driver's seat."

"No shit."

Hiccup finally made it to the front of the mass of students and was able to see what they were staring at and he couldn't help gasping a little himself. Parked there in one of the '15 minute parking' spots was a glossy black Ashton Martin, windows tinted dark enough to completely obscure the interior of the vehicle. "Whoaâ€|" was all Hiccup could manage to say for a moment.

"What do you think that's doing here?" Hiccup turned to ask Jack and was surprised that his eyes were narrowed in irritation even while his cheeks were flushing a bright pink. "Jack?"

"Its here for us." Jack didn't look at him as he spoke.

"..what?"

"That's Pitch's car. Come on." Jack gave Hiccup a shove and ushered him toward the car. Hiccup allowed himself to be herded to the car where he got into the back seat. The interior was just as impressive as the exterior with dark leather covering nearly every surface and what looked like some sort of black wood covering the rest. The whole interior was so clean that it shone in the sunlight that snuck in past Hiccup through the open door. Hiccup closed the door and as Jack opened the front door and slid into the car, slamming the door harder than Hiccup felt was strictly necessary.

"Its rude to slam doors Jack." Hiccup assumed it had been Pitch that had spoken and he squinted in the sudden darkness of the car to get a better look at the figure sitting in the front seat. Even sitting down it was obvious that he was taller than either him or Jack, and thinner than if Hiccup had to guess though the black suit he wore made it harder to tell where the man ended and the car began. His skin was dark almost greyish, like he didn't get much sun and his face, though smiling, had what Hiccup could only describe as a predatory look to it. All in all, even though Hiccup didn't detect any malice or aggressiveness, Pitch made him feel uneasy, like that feeling when a parent asks to talk about something but doesn't tell you what it was.

"Ah, you must be Hiccup. My name is Kozmotis Black, It's a pleasure to finally meet you, Jack has spoken of you quite a lot." Pitch extended a long fingered hand to Hiccup which he shook.

"Nice to meet you too."

"Where's mom?" Jack was clearly perturbed as he spoke.

"Your mother has an issue come up with the charity that she had to take care of and so she asked me to give you both a ride on my way home from the office."

"And I guess she didn't mention anything about not parking in the regular lot in the two hundred eighty thousand dollar car?"

"No she did not. Where exactly am I supposed to park then Jack?"

"Mom usually picked me up a couple blocks down the road."

"Aster has never mentioned having to pick you up down the road, and goodness knows he would have bitched about it at some point."

"Aster comes into the lot because he doesn't drive a two hundred eighty thousand dollar car. People don't look twice at his Jeep."

"What's the problem with people looking twice at a car?"

"Because I'm getting into it."

"I still don't see the issue."

"Its-ugh, just forget it." Jack growled and turned away from Pitch as the latter pulled out of the school lot onto the main road. They drove toward the edge of town for nearly a mile in silence before Hiccup spoke up, wanting to break the tension a bit.

"You uh, you mentioned the office?"

"Hmm? Oh, yes I did."

"â€|what is it that you do?"

"I'm a lawyer."

"Oh, that's cool."

"Sometimes. Other times you find yourself cleaning up after your boyfriend's kid brother."

"Oh, you're the one who got Jack off after he punched Snotlout?"

"I can assure you I have never in my life gotten Jack off in any way. I was-"

"Oh my god you're as bad as Aster!" Jack shouted, his check's flushing. Hiccup couldn't help grinning at Jack's embarrassment, even if Pitches comment had brought a slight flush to his cheeks as well.

"I was the one who intervened on Jack's behalf when he reacted to the young man's deplorable comments yes." Pitch said as though he had not been interrupted.

"I'm glad he didn't get in trouble for it."

"There wasn't any danger of that happening with me to represent him." Hiccup wasn't exactly sure how to respond to that so he just remained quiet while they drove outside the city proper and into the more heavily forested areas surrounding it. His attention was peaked when they turned down a small road Hiccup had never been down before and came to a stop at a large metal gate. Pitch rolled down his window and said "Good evening Phil."

"Good evening Mr. Black, welcome home." Came a muffled and thickly accented voice from a small metal box outside the car. There was a buzzing and the gate swung open to admit them.

"I didn't know you lived in a gated community Jack. I didn't actually know there even was a gated community out here." Jack bit his lower lip before responding to Hiccup with a look of trepidation on his face.

"There, uh, there isn't." Hiccup was about to ask what Jack meant when they passed through a gap in the tress into open space and Hiccup could clearly see what looked like a small hotel. "Hiccup,

welcome to my house." Hiccup stared at Jack in disbelief.

"This is your house? It's bigger than our school!"

"Technically yes but-"

"Not technically, it is! It's-one, two, three, four-four stories high and- wait are those slides coming out of the top of it!?"

"Yes they are, see my dad designed the house from the ground up and he wanted to put something fun into it andâ€" Jack trailed off and quailed under Hiccup's gaze which was equal part astonishment and irritation. "Are you upset?"

"Well I think there might be a few things that you left out about yourself Jack so could you blame me?"

"I didn't really leave that much out-"

"Except for the fact that you live in a giant fucking house with its own gate guard! I think its time for an explanation Jack." Jack sighed.

"My dadâ€"is Nicholas ." Hiccup stared at Jack dumbfounded.

"Nicholas St. North, as in the Nicholas St. North, head of St. North Enterprises?"

"Uh, yeah, that would be the one."

"Butâ€"but how?"

"How what? You knew I was adopted."

"Well yeah butâ€"but I didn't know you were a-a-a billionaire!"

"I'm not. My dad is."

"That's pretty much the same thing! I guess that explains why you were about to spend three hundred dollars on movie concessions."

"How does nobody at school know?"

"I didn't want them to, that's why I go to a public school too."

"But why aren't you followed by a drove of like paparazzi or something? Isn't that what usually happens to the kids of billionaires?"

"Well that's kind of complicated-" Jack started to answer before Pitch cut him off.

"Mr. St. North didn't want his kids to be subjected to that and he employs quite the team of lawyers. They used a few obscure precedents to set it up so that whenever his family is not directly in his presence they are off limits. There pictures can not be used. Of course it's a bit of a flimsy argument, but Enterprises has enough

money to bury anyone trying to fight that in litigation. Besides, Jack here leads a rather boring life and so nobody had bothered to try and fight it. The house is kept free of them as well because of how isolated it is its impossible for them to get anything from the surrounding forests and the last one who tried to sneak onto the property spend four years in prison for it. That's what you get for messing with someone who learned his business sense from the KGB. It seems that after that they are all inclined to follow the rules set forth by Mr. . Personally I think they're scared of him."

"Wowâ€|" Hiccup was still having a hard time process everything that he was learning. How are you supposed to react when you find out that your friend-your boyfriend is rich?

By this time they had reached the house proper and Pitch had pulled into the garage.

"This isâ€|I don't even know how to react to this."

"It's really not that big of a deal Hiccup-"

"Not a big deal? Are you kidding me!? It's a huge deal!" Hiccup knew immediately that he had said the wrong thing by the look that came across Jack's face.

"I'll leave you two alone for a bit." Pitch said and got out of the car.

"This is why I didn't tell you Hiccup."

"Why? Why wouldn't you want me to know-"

"Because I didn't want you to treat me different! It always happens like that as soon as someone finds out about my family they either get so nervous around me they can't speak or they start asking for favors." Hiccup immediately felt like a total ass. He unbuckled himself and leaned forward so he could grab Jack's hand.

"Jack, I'm not going to treat you any differently. It's just a lot to take in." When Jack didn't look completely convinced Hiccup leaned forward and kissed him before pulling away. "I promise." Jack looked at Hiccup for a moment then smiled and leaned back forward and kissed him.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you."

"It's alright, I guess if I always had people treating me weird because of something I wouldn't want to advertise it either." Jack kissed Hiccup one more time before unbuckling himself and opened his door.

"I suppose we should go inside before Pitch assumes were getting it on in his back seat. Last chance to back out." Hiccup laughed.

"No, I think I'm ready to meet your family."

"Famous last words." Hiccup chuckled again as he got out of the car and they headed toward the door to the house. They stopped in front of the door and Jack gave Hiccup a quick peck on the lips before opening the door and, taking him by the hand, leading the way into

the house.

16. Chapter 16

As soon as Hiccup entered the North household he was set upon by Jack's mother.

"Hiccup! Its so wonderful to see you again! Welcome to our home. You can just leave your shoes by the door and here, let me take your bag. You've met Pitch now." She led Hiccup into a kitchen that may have been bigger then his entire first floor, but he'd have to pace it off to be sure.

"He has." Pitch replied from where he was standing, half buried in an enormous refrigerator pulling out various things and setting them on the counter.

"And you've met Aster of course."

"Heya Hiccup, good ta see ya." Aster waved from where he was standing in the Kitchen, near Pitch but far enough away as to not be in his way.

"And of course you know me, which just leaves-"

"Thanks mom, I got it." Jack said as he pushed his way in between them and led Hiccup past the kitchen to a dining area with a large table surrounded by chairs. "This Hiccup, is my dad. Dad, this is Hiccup." The man Jack was speaking to got up out of his chair and Hiccup instinctively took a step back. He was an incredibly large man, on par with Hiccup's own father which was an impressive feat in itself.

"It's nice to meet you Mr. St. North." Hiccup said nervously, offering his hand.

"Please, call me Nick," he said, shaking Hiccup's hand before lifting the small teen off the ground into a bone crushing hug "It is so wonderful to finally meet Jack's boyfriend! We were beginning to think he made you up ya?" Once his initial panic at being grabbed and lifted bodily into the air subsided Hiccup's expression settled on a bemused grin."

"Whooaa! Ah, uh, no, I, uh, I'm real, at least I'm pretty sure I am." Nick laughed as he put Hiccup back down and patted him on the shoulder. Hiccup steadied himself and brushed his shirt flat self-consciously.

"Sorry about that." Jack rubbed Hiccup's back comfortingly.

"We're kinda a huggy feely type 'o family. Specially Pitch here, right babe?"

"Extremely." Hiccup was impressed at just how much sarcasm Pitch was able to fit into that one word.

"It's alright." Anna pulled out a chair next to Jack and sat down.

"So Hiccup, w-"

"Anna, could you lend me a hand in here." Pitch called out from the Kitchen over the sound of clanking pots and pans.

"Can't Aster help you?"

"Really? Are you honestly asking that?" Anna sighed.

"Fine! Jack why don't you show Hiccup around the house?"

"Alright mom," Jack turned toward a set of double doors on the far side of the dining area "follow me Hiccup!"

"Just be sure to be in the dining room by- Pitch! What time will dinner be done?"

"If Aster is helping me, some time tomorrow, if you're helping then around five."

"Hey! I can cook!" Came Aster's indignant voice from the kitchen.

"No love, you really can't."

"I'll help I'll help! So you two be in the dining room by five alright?"

"Sure thing mom."

"Good. It really is great to have you here Hiccup, well talk more at dinner."

"Uh, alright, thanks you Mrs. St. North."

"Anna dear, call me Anna."

"Oh, alright."

"Anna! He's nearly finished washing the grapes, soon he'll want to actually help cook something." Pitch called from the Kitchen.

"Oh screw you."

"Unfortunately I already told your mother I would cook dinner tonight. Ask again later."

"Boys!" Anna shouted as she stood up and stalked into the kitchen.

"Come on lets go." Jack led Hiccup out of the kitchen and away from the sound of continued bickering.

"So Aster and Pitch are, uhâ€¦"

"Yeah there always like that. I'm pretty sure its how they show affection. Remember I told you they went through that rough spot a while back? We first got clued into the fact something was wrong because instead of arguing they were being incredibly polite to one another."

"That must have been awful." Hiccup joked. *

"It kinda was actually. Like it was more peaceful but it just felt wrong to see them like that. They weren't being themselves."

"I guess that would be weird. Like if Astrid stopped being competitive I'd know something was really wrong."

"Exactly. You wanna see my room?"

"Wow, I've only been here a few minutes and already you're inviting me to your room. I think you may have the wrong idea about me Mr. Frost." Hiccup joked and then immediately regretted it as his words rekindled the knot in his stomach.

"You impugn my honor good sir!"

"Well I suppose you've seen my room so it's only fair."

"I've seen yours so now you wanna see mine?" Hiccup blushed more than he normally would have and his stomach twisted a little tighter while Jack chuckled. "Come on, its this way."

After walking through hallways lined with doors that Hiccup was to preoccupied to ask about and taking an elevator (something that Hiccup couldn't help commenting on because come on, who had an elevator in their freaking house) up they stopped in front of a bright blue door. "Well, this is it." Jack opened the door and held it open for Hiccup.

The inside of Jack's room was what Hiccup could only call astounding. The room was huge, if Hiccup guessed it was probably close to 4000 square feet with a ceiling at least two stories high. What looked suspiciously like a movie theater projection screen covered the wall to Hiccup's left along with a shelf containing every video game system released since the NES and no less than five book shelves completely packed with more games than Hiccup could begin to count. The wall to Hiccup's right was dominated by a dresser and two matching wardrobes along with a king sized bed. Hiccup tried not to pay attention to the bed, which was pretty easy given everything else there was around to distract him. The wall directly across from Hiccup was mostly bare except for what looked like a series of oddly shaped lockers, a piano, and several speakers that were taller than Hiccup.

"So uh, yeah. This is my room."

"Wowâ€¦is that a movie theater screen?"

"A small one!" Jack admitted defensively.

"What kinds of movies you got?" Jack sighed in relief and chuckled as he answered.

"We've got a movie room on the second hall. You name it, it's probably in there." Hiccup stared at Jack for a moment with an eyebrow raised.

"â€¦I'll let that go on the condition that we use that some time

tonight." Jack smirked.

"Deal. We've got some time to kill before dinner, we can go pick something out if you like."

"You mean from the designated movie room?"

"Yes from the designated movie room." Hiccup laughed at Jack's exasperation and stuck his tongue out at him.

"I promised I wouldn't treat you any different. I said nothing about not giving you shit."

"Well then you're an ass." Jack looked so dejected as he spoke that Hiccup grabbed his shoulder as he made to turn away and look him in the face.

"Does that really bother you? Because I'm just kidding." Jack's face broke into a smirk and he kissed Hiccup.

"No I know, I was just messing with you back."

"Don't do that." Hiccup punched Jack playfully on the forearm, or at least he'd meant it to be playful.

"Ow!" Jack rubbed his arm with a grimace.

"Are you ok? Sorry, you can blame Astrid for that. Apparently she's rubbed off on me."

"Its alright, I'll make you pay for it later." Jack winked as he led Hiccup out of the bedroom, leaving Hiccup's stomach to roll over, though in excitement for fear he wasn't quite sure.

The North's movie room was huge. Take the best stocked Blockbuster you've ever been to and multiply that by fifty and you'd be in the ballpark of the North's movie room. Row upon row of shelves lined the room like a library with movies organized by genre, age, and then title. Hiccup was too interested in taking a closer look to even give Jack crap about having a bigger movie collection than the Oscars. The pair ended up killing over an hour just browsing through the movies, many of which Jack was just as surprised to find as Hiccup. When Hiccup raised his eyebrow over this fact Jack explained defensively that the entire family kept their movies in the room. In the end they had picked out three movies that Hiccup wanted to watch and headed back to Jack's room to put them aside for later.

"I see where you get all your video game practice." Hiccup commented as they were placing their movies on Jack's by Jack's consoles.

"Yeah, I don't play them as much as I used to but a couple years ago I could spend two or three days in here just playing."

"Wow, my parents would never have let me get away with that." Jack gave a little half hearted smile.

"Honestly I don't know if they even know about that." Hiccup was taken aback by that. From what he'd seen of Jack's parents he had a hard time thinking of them not knowing what their child was up to for

days at a time.

"Really? They seem so involved I guess."

"They are, at least they try to be. Right now is the least busy time of the year for my dad. Come next month he'll be dealing with all sorts of business stuff until after Christmas and then he's usually so spent that he'll spend days at a time in his workshop tinkering. Mom is usually around but she runs all the charity stuff for dad so she's also got her plate full most of the time. Don't get me wrong she makes sure to know where we are and stuff, but if I'm at home I can go for days without really seeing anyone. When Aster is home he's usually around if I want company, but it could get lonely sometimes." Hiccup didn't know what to say. He'd been so busy being astounded at how magnificent Jack's house was he hadn't thought about how lonely it might have been. Grabbing Jack's hand in his he smiled.

"Well you don't have to worry about that anymore." Jack smiled and gave Hiccup a quick kiss. "Now how about you show me what games you've got? Or are they in their own room down the hall?"

"Ha, no there just over here." Jack lead Hiccup to the door he'd noticed earlier and opened it revealing a walk in closet nearly as large as Hiccup's bedroom lined with video games.

"I was kidding about having their own room." Hiccup

"Oh hush."

"Make me." Jack turned to face Hiccup who raised his eyebrows in an unimpressed way.

"My pleasure." Jack smirked and stepped forward and locked his mouth to Hiccup's effectively ending any comeback's from the other boy.

Hiccup wasn't sure how much time passed, as it always just kind of blended together when he was kissing Jack, but the next thing he knew they were lying on the floor, Jack lying on top of him. He could feel the heat coming off his his own body and off of Jack and it was quite clear that Jack was just as excited as he was.

Hiccup nearly bit Jack's lip when there was a sudden and rather loud clearing of a throat from the doorway.

"Really Jack? On the floor? Ya know there's a perfectly good bed not a hundred feet over there?" Jack rolled off of Hiccup and shot up, leaning against one of the shelves awkwardly. Hiccup just lay there, his face flushing a deeper red than it already was. "Sorry fer the cock block boys, Mom wanted me ta come up 'n letcha know dinner's ready so come on down once you two've cooled down a bit ey?"

"Mhm. Yep. Alright." Jack said. Aster turned and left the room chuckling. Jack and Hiccup pointedly looked anywhere but each other for a minute before Hiccup finally broke the silence.

"Well, that was awkward."

"Heh, yeah just a little." Hiccup and Jack looked at each other for a moment. Then Jack let out a single laugh, which Hiccup followed after

a moment later and then they were both just laughing. Jack doubled over and ended up sliding back onto the floor next to Hiccup. They laughed until they were both gasping for air and unable to laugh any more.

"We shouldâ€¦probably headâ€¦to dinner beforeâ€¦" Aster tells them wereâ€¦getting it onâ€¦in the game room." Jack said between gasps.

"You don't think heâ€¦already has?"

"Oh I'm sureâ€¦he has butâ€¦we don't want to lendâ€¦any credence to what heâ€¦says." They lay there catching their breath for a few moment longer before pushing themselves up and, after grabbing on more quick kiss, heading down to dinner.

When their pair arrived for dinner Hiccup was immediately assaulted by the smell of barbecue ribs. "Mmm, that smells really good." Hiccup said as Pitch carried a large wrack over to the table from the kitchen, Aster following behind him with a bowl of fruit salad in one hand and a pile of wet cloths in the other.

"Thank you, its good to see that _some_ people are capable on showing gratitude for my hard work."

"Oh cry me a bloody river. Sorry if'n I don't go drool'n over a dead carcase."

"I don't expect you to eat it, simply acknowledge the effort I put into it."

"You didn't do it fer me, ya did it fer mom."

"That is besides the point."

"Yer just looking fer someone ta stroke yer ego."

"Now your on the right track, though I'm not picky about what it is you are stroking."

"Boys!" Anna interjected sharply, cutting off any further conversation before turning her attention to Hiccup and Jack. "Don't forget to wash your hards boys." There seemed to be something just a little off in the way she gave the friendly reminder, and apparently Hiccup was right because Jack looked from his mom to Aster and then growled in exasperation.

"Oh my god mom, we weren't doing anything!"

"What do you mean?" Anna's denial was undermined when Nick spoke up from his place at the head of the table.

"Is not what Aster said." His tone was clearly teasing, which helped Hiccup not find the situation _completely_ mortifying.

"Well Aster is a god damn liar! He-"

"Language Jack," Anna's voice, soft but sharp, cut Jack off "and hands." She gestured to the kitchen sink which Jack headed over to grumbling darkly. Hiccup followed him, washing his hands after Jack,

and then took a place at the table next to Jack.

"Alright boys, dig in!" Nick said, already cutting off a section of ribs bigger than Hiccup's head. Hiccup followed suite when it was his turn, helping himself to a larger portion than he usually would have, but he was hungry and they smelled amazing. He also filled his plate with some of the fruit which had some sort of sweet glaze and another side dish that he wanted to call mashed potatoes except that felt much to plain to describe whatever Pitch had done to them.

"This is amazing." He said to Pitch after swallowing a large bit of the potatoes.

"Thank you, the potatoes are alright? I tried a little something different with them then I usually do."

"There excellent, I've honestly never had any kind of potatoes as good as this."

"I agree Koz, these are fantastic. Whatever you did, remember it for next time." Anna added. North expressed his approval with a grunt, his mouth to full of potato to speak.

"So whatcha think 'o the house Hiccup?" Aster asked after a moment of silence.

"It'sâ€¦well it's amazing. I mean I've never been in a house quite like it." Hiccup wasn't really sure what else to say.

"Thank you dear, were thrilled to have you over."

"Ya," Nick said with his mouth full of ribs before swallowing hard and continuing "it is truly wonderful to meet you. It had been like pulling teeth getting information from Jack, so how about you tell us about you?"

"Oh ummmâ€¦" Hiccup blushed, embarrassed about being put on the spot like this. He cleared his throat and told them about his Dad and his classes, he mentioned Astrid and Toothless and they (mostly Anna) asked follow up questions for most of what he said. He had the strangest feeling that he was being interviewed for some sort of job which only added the the awkward feeling. The trend continued until he mentioned that he occasionally liked to tinker when eh ad the free time. Nick perked up at that immediately.

"Tinker? Like what?"

"Well, I built this robotic hand that would scratch my cat whenever he wanted for when I wasn't around but he didn't really take to it."

"Automatic cat scratcher! Ha! I think I have something to show you that you will very much enjoy! Jack, why did you not mention before that Hiccup tinkers?"

"I was pretty sure that it would come up at some point, and I didn't want you taking up all his time."

"I would not-" North started indignantly.

"Yes you would." The rest of the family coursed in unison and then laughed. North _hurumphed._

_ "_How about we break out the dessert huh?" Anna said brightly, nudging Nick playfully.

"Of course Anna." Pitch stood up and gathered everybody's plate before gliding off to the kitchen to deposit them. Hiccup hadn't noticed until that moment that he and Aster had not been eating ribs like the rest of the family. He couldn't tell what exactly they had been eating from the remnants he glimpsed on Aster's plate but it appeared to be some sort of vegetable.

"Why don't they eat what everyone else eats?" Hiccup asked Jack in a low voice that was mostly drowned out by Anna's attempts to break an obtainment Nick's frown.

"Oh, Aster is a vegetarian so whenever the meal has meat Pitch makes something else for them."

"Wait, so he'll cook meat but not eat it?"

"Pitch isn't a vegetarian, at least not himself. He does it for Aster."

"Wow thats commitment. You're not going to ask me to give up hamburgers are you?" Hiccup joked. Jack gave a little frown and shook his head.

"Aster didn't ask Pitch to stop eating meat, he just sort of did it."

"Wowâ€¦| "

"Yeah, that was pretty much what Aster said when he realized what was going on." Their conversation was interrupted that moment as Pitch returned with a pie in one hand and several plates balanced in the other which he dolled out to the table. He made second round and deposited a steaming slice of apple pie on everyone's place but Aster's voiced his displeasure at being skipped.

"Ey! What gives?"

"Hmm? Did you want some?" Aster narrowed his eyes at the slender man.

"As a matter o' fact I did."

"My apologies, I assumed that you wouldn't want dessert after the main meal was such a disappointment."

"What are you on about? It was delicious, like always."

"Ah, now you say something with pie on the line."

"I'm sorry I didn' know I had ta compliment every darned thing ya cook!

"Its just good manners to thank whoever cooked your meal."

"Well next time yer feelin' hungry fer compliments feel free ta mention it."

"Oh please if I dropped hints any harder I'd break your foot. Its not my fault you are so dense."

"The way you two go at it I swear I wonder why you're even together sometimes." Jack said in exasperation hoping they would tone it down a bit. Of course that was asking far too much.

"The sex." They both said in unison.

"Boys please" Anna said in a disapproving tone "we're eating."

"What? I coulda said it was cause 'e could fit half my arm-" Aster started to speak but was interrupted by Pitch.

"Oh you should talk. I'm pretty sure the purple one is still lodged somewhere up-"

"BOYS!" Anna shouted over them "that is quite enough!" She then turned and smacked Nick, who had tried to laugh and instead succeeded in choking himself, hard on the back. Hiccup could feel his check's warming at the comments, but he also felt surprisingly happy. There was something strangely calming about how casual Jack's family was about subject that wouldn't even be whispered about in his own household. The way they were so comfortable with one another in turn made Hiccup feel comfortable being around them.

"Now then," Anna's said, managing to keep almost all of her irritation from her voice "Let's enjoy some of Pitches delicious pie." Aster only managed to open his mouth before Anna pointed a finger directly at him. "Not a word." Hiccup let out a chuckle at that which set Jack off laughing and soon the entire family joined it. Nick's booming laugh reverberated around the room, Aster's boisterous laugh giving him a fun for his money. Anna covered her mouth, clearly trying and failing not to snort. Pitch's laughter mostly took the form of a smile that transformed his face into something much less intimidating than usual and his shoulder's shaking in silent laughter occasionally punctuated with a light chuckle. As they all sat there trying to stop laughing, and sending one another into fits further fits when they failed, Hiccup thought about how great it felt to laugh like this, and to not have to worry about what people would think about his boyfriend, and he found himself hoping that he would be invited to spend a lot more time here.

17. Chapter 17

****Hey! I'm alive! Sorry its been sooooo long since the last chapter, I had a lot of end of semester stress to deal with and then a soul crushing summer job for a while that took up most of my time and killed my motivation to write anything in what freetime I did have, but that over now and I am back! As always I hope you enjoy the chapter and if you do please leave a comment and let me know!**

Hiccup had expected that the North family would go their separate

ways after dinner as was usually the case in his own home. Instead Nick had asked him and Jack what they planned to do after dinner, ignored Aster's particularly suggestive snort that made Hiccup's stomach quaver slightly, and upon hearing their plans to watch a movie suggested, in that fatherly way of suggesting things that made it seem less like a request and more like an order, that they all watch the movie in the family room. And so they had, Hiccup following closely behind everyone else through the various hallways of the North household to a family room that, to hiccup's surprise, was about the same size he would expect from a normal sized home. The large screen TV covering one wall from ceiling to floor was the only thing that fit in with the rest of house. The room was ringed on the three sides not covered in flat screen by a couch that was wide enough that Hiccup thought three of him could lie on it comfortably and be in no danger of falling off. When Hiccup had commented on the size of the room Anna had answered simply "The family room is where you go to be close to your family, so we didn't want to be all spread out in a giant room." That made a lot of sense. They had turned the movie on and again to Hiccup's surprise, and initial discomfort, the other two couples had paired off, each claiming a side of the couch. Nick spread out as soon as he hit the couch, propping himself up in one of the corners and if it wasn't for the white beard Hiccup would have sworn his father was sitting in the room with him. The only thing that was out of place was the petite form of Anna nestling into the crook of his arm, her head resting against his large shoulder. Aster took a seat on the edge of the side of the couch opposite the TV and Pitch joined him, draping himself across the seat so that his head lay in Aster's lap. Jack too a seat on the remaining side of the couch and Hiccup made to take a seat next to him, but hesitated as he realized that there was plenty of room for him to cuddle up next to Jack if he wanted to, and part of him certainly wanted to. The rest of him quailed at the idea of doing that in front of Jack's family and in the end Hiccup took a seat next to Jack, leaving half a foot of empty couch between them.

PDA had never really been a thing in his home growing up and the clear affection being displayed by the other couples made Hiccup feel uncomfortable. So there he sat forty five minutes later feeling like an outcast. Jack hadn't given any reaction to his choice to sit away from him during the movie, and neither had any of the other family members, but Hiccup still felt guilty. He hadn't been able to pay any attention to the movie either, too focused on the way Nick would readjust himself whenever Anna moved slightly or how Aster's fingers were absently running through Pitch's dark hair, and the fact that Jack was sitting almost as still as Hiccup. They all just seemed so incredibly comfortable. Even Pitch who had withdrawn an e-reader from a pocket and become absorbed in something he clearly found much more interesting than the movie, seemed like he belonged there. Hiccup felt like a complete idiot for being so self conscious around this particular group of people, but he was still to uncomfortable to do anything about it. Suddenly Pitch looked up from his e-reader for the first time since he'd brought it out and caught Hiccup's eye. Hiccup's cheek reddened and he looked away, feeling even more awkward for having gotten caught staring. When he glanced back a moment later he was horrified to find that Pitch was still staring at him. Pitch's piercing golden eyes caught his gaze as he was about to look away and the dark eyebrows raised as he looked between Hiccup and Jack. His gaze seemed to ask What seems to be the problem? Hiccup shrugged and glanced at the ground briefly. When Hiccup looked back at Pitch he gave a small shrug - not a dismissive shrug, more a 'whatever you

need to do' kind of shrug - and raised a hand over his head and laced his finger's through Aster's. Hiccup saw Aster's lips raise in a small smile and the way that nobody in the room reacted to Pitch's action and, after a deep breath, turned his head as little as possible to look Jack who'd he'd been pointedly avoiding looking at for the last half-hour. Jack was staring at the screen clearly wrapped up in the movie, maybe a little too wrapped up but Hiccup wasn't sure if that was actually the case of just his own paranoia making him see things that weren't there. Jack noticed Hiccup looking at him and gave him a smile which Hiccup returned and, feeling both foolish and awkward, turned away from Jack to face the screen and leaned back slowly until he was leaning against the white haired teen, his head resting in the crook of Jack's shoulder. Jack was still for a second before he melted around Hiccup, his arms coming up to wrap around a scrawny chest and nimble fingers began running through messy hair. Hiccup still felt self conscious, even though he knew there was no real reason for it, but those feelings were overshadowed by the feeling of contentment he felt being wrapped in Jack's arms while nimble fingers played with his thick auburn hair. Hiccup closed his eyes and sighed, nestling closer to Jack as he tried to let himself just enjoy the moment, something that was admittedly pretty easy to do. He glanced over at Pitch who gave him a small smile and a nod before going back to his book and then looked up at Jack who also gave him a much bigger smile, leaned down, and gave him a kiss on the forehead which made him feel please and a little self conscious - but mostly pleased.

Both Nick and Anna's phones rang several times throughout the movie, but after glancing at the screen they always rejected the call, until near the end of the movie when Anna's phone rang and after checking the number she got up and walked out of the room. Hiccup assumed by the lack of reaction from the rest of the people in the room that that sort of thing was a regular occurrence and had just closed his eyes again when Anna's voice, raised to a volume and carrying a tone that Hiccup had not heard in it thusfar, came through the open door from the hallway

"What do you mean held up in customs? That shipment is charity goods and it was already pre-cleared by the state department! Oh does he now? Of course not! No don't you give that greedy bastard a dime." Jack Aster and North were looking at one another as silence fell and then Anna's head appeared in the doorway to the hallway. "I'm going to have to deal with this and it looks like its going to take a while. Can you take care of getting the boys settled for bed when your done here?" She asked Nick, her voice almost at its usual pleasant tone but holding just a but of the hard edge it had gained while she was on the phone.

"Of course, I will take care of it. You go deal with greedy bastard." Anna gave a aggrieved face as Jack and Aster chuckled before looking at each of them.

"Goodnight boys."

"Night mom."

"Goodnight Hiccup, it has been wonderful having you so far, promise to keep Jack this well behaved in the future and you are welcome to come over whenever you want."

"Oh, uh, goodnight Mrs. North, and, uh, thank you." Hiccup stammered, not entirely sure how to respond as Jack's mother disappeared back into the hallway.

"Be sure to bring spare bedding for Hiccup when you go to bed Jack, yah?" North asked. Jack looked at his father quizzically for a moment, opened his mouth to speak and closed it again as a look that Hiccup could only call devious flashed across his face before he arranged his features into a more neutral expression.

"Yeah sure no problem Dad."

"Good good." With that North settled back down to watch the movie, leaving Jack to grin and Hiccup to wonder at Jack's strange reaction to North's simple question.

The living room was silent for the rest of the movie which Hiccup had tried to pay attention to then given up after a few minutes since he'd already missed the first two thirds of it. When the movie did come to an end and the credits started to play everyone got up slowly and stretched. "Alright boys I'm going to workshop, have a good night and call if you need anything. It was a pleasure to meet you Hiccup, hope to see you here more often in the future ya?" North said as he made his way to the doorway.

"Uh thanks." North smiled, waved goodnight to the rest of the room and disappeared out the door.

"Well, it's already later than I would prefer and I have a consultation tomorrow morning. As has been said already, it's good to finally meet you and see that Jack's pining wasn't for naught. Goodnight." Pitch swept from the room, stopping at the door to look at Aster, "Coming?"

"Yeah yeah I'm coming. Goodnight you two, or and don't worry about being quiet" Aster said looking at Hiccup, "Jackie's room is soundproof." Aster laughed as he ducked the coaster Jack threw at him and followed Pitch out of the room.

"Don't listen to him, he just lives to ruin my life."

"Oh I know, it's fine." Hiccup tried to laugh away the comment and not show the fact that his stomach had started to tighten again.

"We should probably head back to my room, it is pretty late."

"Lead the way, I'd need a map to find my way back to it by myself."

"You get used to the layout after a while, it seems pretty big but like a third of the back side of the house is North's workshop and there's never any reason to go to the upper levels unless you're looking for my mom or dad. Plus there are the guest rooms and the party room-"

"Party room? What's a party room?"

"Heh, it's not as fun as it sounds. That's what we call it but I think the official name is a formal dining room. It's basically just a big room with a big table where my mom and dad can host parties and

stuff."

"Ah, yeah you're right that isn't nearly as excited as it sounded." The both laughed and the conversation died down into a comfortable silence while Jack lead Hiccup through the house to a room that wasn't Jack's. "So where are we now then? I thought you said we were going back to your room."

"We are, were just stopping off to grab some spare blankets."

"Oh thats right." Jack opened the door to a room about twice the size of Hiccup's bedroom filled with shelves crammed with matching sheet, blankets and pillows. "So do we just grab some orâ€|?" Hiccup gestured vaguely at one of the shelves as he spoke.

"Not these, there for the guest rooms. The really good ones are over here." Jack said as he lead Hiccup through the rows of linens to shelf in the very back of the room filled with a mismatched assortment of blankets, sheets, quilts and pillows. "Go ahead of take whatever you like." After riffling through the shelf a bit Hiccup settled on a blanket that was fluffier then any blanket he'd ever seen in his entire life and a pillow that he thought might actually be made out of a cloud. While Hiccup was grabbing his bedding Jack had retrieved some sort of foam sleeping pad for Hiccup and together they made their way to his room carrying their burdens. As they walked Hiccup found he couldn't get Aster's parting comment out of his head.

"So, your room isn't soundproof then?" Hiccup asked, feeling his cheeks redden at the implications of his questions that he hopped Jack didn't think he meant.

"Oh, uh yeah it is actually."

"Oh uhâ€|why?"

"Because thats where I practice, so when mom and dad built the house and decided to put in a professional speaker system into the room, they thought it would be a good idea to soundproof it, especially since my room is the closest to the party room."

"Oh, that makes a lot of sense."

"Yeah, my parents are pretty smart when their not being parents."

"Your parents seem pretty awesome. I mean there a lot more open then my dad thats for sure."

"Yeah I guess they do look even better by comparison there don't they."

"Well my dad isn't that bad, I mean he can be distant a lot, but he takes care of me."

"Yeah, your just scared to tell him who you really are because you think he will hate you. Parent of the year material right there." The hardness in Jack's voice both surprised and angered Hiccup, combined with what Jack had actually said Hiccup was suddenly pissed. Sure his dad had issues as a parent, some bigger then others, but he did love

Hiccup and take care of him. As far as parents go his dad could be a lot worse and Hiccup said as much.

"Hey he does his best! Don't talk about him like he beats me or something." Hiccup was too pissed to acknowledge his surprise that he was defending his father's parenting. Jack's voice was quite when he answered.

"If he beat you I'd have him arrested in half a second." There as another moment of silence and then Jack spoke, "I'm sorry Hiccup, I shouldn't have said what I said." Hiccup sighed and wished his arms were free so he could wraps an arm around Jack. He had to settle for bumping Jack's arm with his elbow.

"Its alright, I know why you said it." Things were quiet for the short remainder of the walk to Jack's room. When they got there Jack deposited the sleeping pad on the floor next to his bad and Hiccup dropped the linens on top of it.

"So now what are we gonna do?" Hiccup asked. Jack raised and eyebrow suggestively which made Hiccup blush which in turn made Jack laugh which made Hiccup throw a pillow at Jack's head which caused Jack to retaliate and soon they were beating each other to a pulp with pillows. When it became clear neither was going to admit defeat in the great pillow war, Jack suggested they settle it with a Smashbrothers through the ages contest which Hiccup agreed too. Jack went to fetch the games while Hiccup settled down on the couch and tried to catch his breath.

Soon they were embroiled in heated digital combat, working their way through the original Super Smashbrothers, Melee, Brawl and finally ending at the most recent game where they were tied in wins. When the final match came down to sudden death Hiccup knew he had it in the bag since he'd won every single sudden death do far as he had discovered Jack was terrible at dodging bombs raining form the sky. At least he thought he had it in the bag right up until he felt fingers dancing along his side. He flinched away from Jack's tickling and looked back at the screen in time to watch in horror as instead of avoiding the falling bomb like he had intended, his mistimed jump put him on a direct collision course with one which promptly exploded and launched him off the screen, declaring Jack the 'winner' of the game. "You cheater!"

"How did I cheat?"

"How did youâ€¦how do you think you cheated? You tickled me!"

"Don't try to blame me just cause you can't dodge a little bomb Hiccup."

"Oh you bastard, your gonna pay for that!" Hiccup grabbed his previously discarded pillow and swung for Jack's head. Jack jumped over the back of the couch and scrambled away.

"You're gonna have to do better than that if you wanna catch me Hiccup!"

"Oh you're mine!" Hiccup jumped of from the couch and charged after Jack, slamming into him in the middle of the room and bringing them both crashing to the floor. "You don't remember what you did? Here

let me refresh your memory!" Hiccup shouted at he began to tickle Jack mercilessly.

"Ah-haha- Huccip sto-ahaha- stop you monter! How-ahahaha- how could you!" Jack pleaded for mercy to no avail.

"Admit you cheated!"

"Ne-ne-ahaha-NEVER!"

"Admit it and maybe I'll let you go."

"I'll ne-never admit anything! I'm a-a-ahahah-a a rock!"

"That may be, but your also completely at my mercy."

"Oh really?" Hiccup wasn't exactly sure what happened but with a couple swift motions that looked to be right out of a spy movie he found himself on his back, pinned down by all of Jack's weight and with Jack's hand pinning both of his own over his head.

"Whoaâ€|how did you do that?" Jack took a moment to answer as he was panting heavily, trying to get his breath back after his vicious tickling.

"Selfâ€|self defense training. Dad tough me and Aster how to protect ourselves if we would ever need too.

"Ah, well I have to admit that was pretty impressive."

"Thanks."

"How long has your dad bee teaching you self defense?"

"A few years, he says that everyone should know how to protect themselves."

"Huh, maybe I should get him to teach me."

"Hah, I'd pay good money to watch that. My dad is a very hands on teacher, he believes in learning by doing. I could talk to him if you really waaa nice try!" Jack exclaimed as Hiccup tried to throw him off by spinning in place which lead to them both rolling in tangled mess of limbs with Hiccup once again pinned under Jack.

"Damn it."

"Aww that was cute, like watching a kitten acting all tough at a full grown cat." Jack's voice was incredibly patronizing.

"Jackass." Hiccup said as he tried to throw Jack off again.

"Maybe, but I'm you're jackass." Jack leaned down as he spoke and pressed his lips to Hiccup's who stopped trying to fight back at that point. Jack withdrew a minute later with both of them breathing a little faster. It wasn't until then that Hiccup fully comprehended the position they were in. His cheek's immediately flushed beet red and his stomach began tying itself in knots as he realized that he

was pinned down underneath Jack with one of his legs bent so his ankle was resting on Jack's shoulder. Jack leaned in for another kiss but Hiccup turned his head away and pushed Jack away.

"Is something wrong?" Jack said hesitantly, clearly confused by Hiccup's reaction.

"Yeah, I mean sorta I justâ€¦please let me up Jack." Jack jumped up and fell back into a sitting position, still clearly unsure what was going on, as Hiccup stood up, crossed his arms, and looked around before walking over and sitting on the edge of Jack's bed. Confusion turning into concern Jack stood and walked over to Hiccup, taking a seat a respectful distance from the other boy and tentatively putting a hand on his shoulder.

"Hiccup, whats wrong?"

"Nothing." Hiccup knew his words were a lie and Jack's expression and raised eyebrow clearly said that he did to. Sighing Hiccup started again, avoiding looking at Jack as he spoke. "Its just, the way we were laying down there was veryâ€¦suggestive. And you invited me to spend the night, in your room, and I don't think I'm ready for that kind of stuff yet I mean don't get me wrong I really like you Jack like a lot and its not like I don't want to do that kind of thing with you or that I don't think about it its just that I don't think I'm ready for something like that please don't be mad." Hiccup took a deep breath and looked at Jack who was staring at Hiccup looking slightly dumbfounded by Hiccup's rambling explanation. Coming back to himself Jack moved his hand from Hiccup's shoulder to his hand and squeezed it.

"Oh God Hiccup, did you think that I invited you over to have sex?"

"No, well kind of, I mean I didn't think that but then I was talking with Astrid and she was making jokes and then Aster's joking and stuff and I mean we are teen aged boys its kind of expected and I just-"

"Hiccup take a breath. And calm down ok? I would never, never try to get you to do anything that you didn't want to do. And I promised that when I invited you to spend the night tonight it had nothing to do with sex."

"I know it wasn't, I justâ€¦I just let myself get psyched out by everything. I'm sorry." Jack gave Hiccup a gentle kiss.

"There's noting to be sorry for." Hiccup smiled as he felt the weight that had been weighing on his chest all night fade away and wrapped his arms around Jack's neck pulling him back into the kiss and deepening it in one motion. As they continued to kiss Hiccup pulled Jack down onto the bed and somehow their shirts ended up on the floor. As Hiccup ran his hands along Jack's chest new feelings began to take the place of the trepidation he had been feeling previously. Nervousness began to coalesce in his chest again but now it was colored by excitement instead of fear as the part of his mind that was completely caught up in the moment went to war with the rest of him. The latter urging him to get control of himself while the former guided his hands steadily lower while the nervous excitement in his chest wound tighter and tighter. Hiccup hesitated when his ringers

brushed against the denim of Jack's jeans and it seemed like the more logical part of his brain was going to win when an arrant thought drifted through his mind besides, what would your dad think if he saw you like this? Overcoming his hesitation Hiccup's nimble fingers attacked Jack's belt and jeans. He had just gotten the button undone when hands grabbed his wrists and pulled them up and away from their target. Jack broke the kiss and looked Hiccup right in the eye.

"I thought you were just freaking out over doing stuff like that? And now you're undoing my pants?"

"I know, but when you said that we didn't have to do anything it calmed down whatever I was worried about and I was kind of thinking that, just because we don't have to do anything it doesn't mean we can't do anything, right?"

"Right," Jack answered slowly, drawing the words out "but I thought you weren't ready for anything like that."

"I didn't think I was, but I think taking away the pressure kind of changed my mind."

"Are you sure about that?" Hiccup bit his lower lip and thought for a second before answering.

"Well I don't think I'm ready to go all the way, but, I mean, there are other things to do," Hiccup trailed off and looked away from Jack blushing furiously. In response Jack leaned down and pressed his lips to Hiccup. The kiss started out slow and gentle but quickly became much more passionate and after a moment's hesitation Hiccup's fingers were back at their previous task which they completed in short order since all that was left to do was undo Jack's zipper which he had done in a heartbeat. Slipping his thumbs into Jack's underwear at his hips Hiccup took a deep breath through his nose and then pulled Jack's pants and underwear down to his knees in one smooth motion. Hiccup lay there for a moment frozen by a combination of fear and excitement. Finally he found the will to slide his hand back up along Jack's thigh until he was cupping the other teen's groin. Hiccup finally released his held breath as he curled his fingers, getting a better grip on Jack and feeling that was at least as excited as Hiccup himself was. At that point Jack's own hand stopped tracing patterns on Hiccup's back and found their way to the button of his jeans which they undid in short order and, with a couple swift motions, both teen's pants joined their shirts.

After a thrilling and very thorough period of exploration Jack started to slowly slide his hand up and down and Hiccup followed suit a moment later, the pair slowly increasing their pace until they were forced to break their kiss because both of their breathing was heavy and ragged. Hiccup could feel himself getting close and so he redoubled his efforts on Jack and was rewarded with a deep intake of breath from the white haired teen. After a moment under his increased ministrations Hiccup felt Jack's legs tense up and he began thrusting erratically into Hiccup's hand as he spilled over the edge. Jack was panting heavily in the wake of his climax but that didn't take away from the attention that he was paying Hiccup and it only took a few more seconds with the newly applied lubricant for Hiccup's toes to curl and his legs to tense up as well. When Hiccup finished Jack flopped down next to Hiccup, wrapping his arm around Hiccup's shoulders and running his clean hand slowly up and down his freckled

side.

When they were both able to breath properly again Jack broke the silence "That wasâ€¦"

"Amazing?" Hiccup supplied.

"I was looking for something a little less cliché, but yeah, Amazing pretty much sums it up." Jack angled his head to give Hiccup a slow and gentle kiss before pulled away and pushing himself up off the bed.

"Where are you going?"

"To get you something to clean you up with."

"Oh," Hiccup tore his gaze away from the very pleasant sight of a retreating Jack to look down and examine the extent of the mess splattered across his groin, stomach, and chest "thanks." Jack vanished into the bathroom and appeared a minute later with a towel damp with warm water.

"That should do the trick."

"Thanks." Hiccup said as he took the towel and cleaned himself. When he finished Jack returned the towel to the bathroom then hopped back into his bed and wrapped his arms around Hiccup. They lay there for a long time, not saying anything, Jack's fingers running idly through Hiccup's hair. Neither of them felt the need to break the silence until Hiccup gave a huge yawn which point Jack spoke.

"You know, the bed is plenty big for two people, and the floor isn't nearly as comfortable."

"Why sir, are you inviting me to spend the night in your bed? Just what are you trying to insinuate?" Jack snorted and hugged Hiccup tighter.

"So, would you like to?"

"Hmmmâ€¦I think I'd like that very much." Hiccup said, nuzzling closer to Jack.

"Me too." Jack turned the lights and Hiccup nestled himself into the crook of Jack's arm.

"Goodnight Jack."

"Goodnight Hiccup, I'll see you in the morning."

"See you then, sweet dreams."

Hiccup must have been more tired than Jack thought because he was out within a fire minutes of saying goodnight, but Jack took longer to fall asleep, not that he minded; he was perfectly content to lay they are enjoy the situation, feelings Hiccup's skin pressed against his own and listening to the other boys slow rhythmic breathing. He was just starting to feel the pull of sleep when he noticed the notification light on his phone was flashing alerting him of a new text message from his mother. Grabbed it carefully as not to wake up

Hiccup he grabbed the phone and read:

_Mom:I'm not going to come into your room as to avoid creating memories that neither of us will be able to unsee, but I am texting you to let you know that I'm adding another week on the car.

_

Jack: What?! Why? We didn't really even do anything! And aren't you always the one saying that there is nothing to be ashamed of with sex and that you would rather I be doing it safely under your room than trying to sneak around?

_Mom: I don't care if you did or did not do anything (because there is no 'didn't really even' you either did or you didn't), thats not what the punishment is for. The punishment is for taking advantage of your father. You knew that I had planned on Hiccup staying in a guest room and you went against that. _

Jack:â€¦fineâ€¦I'm sorry.

Mom: You are forgiven, just don't do it again. Also, I'm assuming 'didn't really even do anything' means you did something, so congratulations!

Jack: OH GOD MOM STOP!

_Mom: My little Jack is becoming a man. _

Jack: For the love of god, please don't be like that tomorrow. And you better not tell Aster any of this!

Mom: Oh please honey I'm not cruel, I'm already punishing you with the car I wouldn't put you through that too.

Jack: Thanks. I love you :)

Mom: I love you to Jack :) Now clean up and go to bed!

Jack: OH MY GOD MOM STOP!

18. Chapter 18

****Hey! Guess who's not dead! I feel like I say that so much it should just be my catch phrase at this point. Quick heads up, there's a bit of an author's note/house keeping ****thing**** at the end of the chapter if you are interested in what happening with me and stuff. Anywho, I hope you enjoy my darlings! ****

Jack blinked his eyes slowly as he awoke the next morning, his sleep-muddled brain trying to make sense of the unfamiliar weight radiating warmth pressed against his side. He turned his head and came face to face with a pair a bright green eyes set in a familiar freckled face. Memories of the previous night came rushing back to the forefront of his mind and he smiled.

"Well hello there handsome."

Hiccup's lips pulled up into a smile as he looked at Jack "Good morning sleeping beauty."

Jack cocked an eyebrow quizzically "And what exactly is that supposed to mean?"

"That if you slept much longer I was going to go find a bucket of ice water."

"Why didn't you wake me?"

Hiccup shrugged "Didn't really see a reason to."

"What have you been doing while I've been snoring?"

"Lying here, enjoying myself, thinking about last night."

Hiccup's voice seemed innocent enough, but there was an undertone of suggestiveness that had Jack smirking. Jack had just woken up and so was standing at attention ready for round 2 from last night, and Hiccup's position pressed against him told Jack that the other boy was in a similar position. "Oh?" Jack questioned pointedly. "And what exactly were you thinking about last night hmm."

"I've been thinking that I'm such a whore."

Jack choked out a laugh, "Excuse me?"

"Or is it a slut? Which one gets paid and which does it for fun?"

"You're not a slut."

"I don't know, here I am sleeping with a guy after like a week of dating, seems pretty slutty to me."

"First off, a slut is someone who has sex in a way you don't approve of, so it's like impossible to call yourself a slut and second, you're not a slut. You," Jack's voice gained a pointedly sensual tone as he rolled over onto his hands and knees so that he was looking down at Hiccup "are my exceptionally sexy boyfriend who can do whatever he wants, and fuck anybody who said otherwise."

"Oh? And what if I say otherwise?" Jack blinked down at Hiccup in surprise as the brunette began to blush at his own.

"Why what a dirty mind you have Hiccup! I'm I corrupting you?" Jack said in mock shock as he leaned down and pressed his lips to Hiccup's.

"And what if," Hiccup said between kisses "you are?" Jack grinned into their kiss and leaned his head back, deepening it. A repeat performance of the previous evening quickly followed suite and left both boys breathing heavily and grinning broadly. Jack was just getting up to retrieve the towel from where it had been thrown the previous evening when his phone chimed. Tossing Hiccup the towel he snatched up his phone and check the message.

Mom: Breakfast in 20 minutes. Shower first, both of you. Smirking he tapped out a response.

Jack: If we both shower we'll need more than 20 minutes. Jack

finished typing as he slipped back into the bed with Hiccup and he was caught what Jack had typed right before he sent it.

"Oh my god Jack." Hiccup shook his head incredulously. "I can't believe you just said that to your mom."

"Really? Seems exactly like the kind of thing that I would do." Jack joked. He was about to say something more when his phone chimed again and he checked the message, Hiccup looking over his shoulder. The freckled teen let out a bark of laughter while Jack flushed.

Mom: I very much doubt that sweetie.

"My god mom." Zach sighed as his own faint blush mirrored hiccup's as they read the text.

"Well we should probably get ready for breakfast, I doubt we want you mom coming to get us."

"She wouldn't come get us, she'd probably send Aster, which would be much worse," Jack commented as he pulled himself out of bed, offering his hand to Hiccup and helping the gangly teen to his feet. "After you." Jack gestured toward the bathroom.

"Well, what a gentleman," Hiccup joked as he headed toward the bathroom.

"Of course, I'm always a gentleman. Plus it lets me stare at your ass on the way." Jack laughed and hopped out of the way as Hiccup turned and swatted at him.

Hiccup still couldn't quite wrap his head around everything that had happened since he arrived at the North home, and everything that was still happening. He, Hiccup Haddock, the introverted, socially awkward, deeply closeted boy was currently standing naked in front of an absolutely gorgeous guy who he'd recently had sex with -sort of. That fact alone was almost incomprehensible to the freckled teen, but even more baffling was the fact that he wasn't feeling self-conscious or awkward or embarrassed or anything that he would have expected to be feeling. Whatever this strange effect that was preventing him from feeling what he would usually have felt if he were standing naked in front of someone else, Hiccup hoped it remained at least long enough for them to shower. It did.

The pair of them got into the shower together but only after Hiccup extracted a promise from Jack that he would behave himself, which he did for the most part. There may have been some making out under the steaming water, but Hiccup had to admit he was just as much at fault for that as Jack so he let it slide. In fact, if Hiccup wasn't worried about taking too long and having Aster sent up after them he may have been the one misbehaving, his newly awakened teenage libido was certainly ready for another round. With an effort he was able to resist the considerable temptation, though it was very clear throughout the shower just how ready for another round both he and Jack were, a fact that made soaping up a risky affair to say the least. Still, they managed to make good time showering and, after toweling off and getting dressed, made it to the kitchen only three minutes late.

"There you two are, I was just about to send Aster to get you," Anna

said from the kitchen where she and Pitch were piling various breakfast foods onto several plates. The smell coming from the kitchen smelled amazing and Hiccup said as much as he took a seat at the table with Jack, Aster, and Nick.

"Thank you Hiccup." Pitch said as he deposited a bowl of scrambled eggs, a skillet of fresh hash brown and a bowl gravy on the table to join the fresh fruit, biscuits, and sausage Anna had brought over. "I must say it's refreshing to have someone around who knows how to express gratitude properly, I could get used to it." He gave Aster a pointed look as he spoke though Hiccup could now see that his comments were just playful banter between the couple.

"Sooo," Aster drew out the word as he spooned some eggs onto his plate "You have a good lay last night Jacky?" Hiccup coughed on the sip of orange juice he'd taken and began to blush a furious red, all the self-consciousness that had been so wonderfully absent earlier that morning came rushing back.

Jack looked from Aster to his mother and spoke incredulously "Mom! You said you wouldn't say anything!"

Staring directly at the biscuit she was slicing in two Anna said "I didn't." Hiccup watched as Jack's eyes widened in what he assumed was horror as he realized his mistake and looked at Aster, who's face wore the expression of a small child with a magnifying glass who'd just discovered an anthill.

"Wait, you really did? Way to g-OW!" Aster winced and turned to glare at Pitch, "What was that?"

"A warning," Pitch said calmly as he spooned eggs onto his plate "behave, or I beat you with the skillet."

Hiccup turned to Pitch in surprise, as did the rest of the family, Aster glared at him for a moment then hunched over in his chair and stabbed at slice of melon on his plate. An awkward silence hung over the table keeping anyone from making eye contact until it was finally broken by Nick's deep voice.

"Did you sleep well last night Hiccup?" There was an intake of breath and then a grunt from Aster and Hiccup turned to him in time to see him glaring at Pitch, the latter eyeing the hashbrown filled skillet meaningfully.

"Uh, I slept fine, thanks," Hiccup mumbled, feeling incredibly self-conscious as he spoke.

"Good, good," Nick said, oblivious to the teens discomfort. "You had mentioned you liked to build models and tinker yes?"

"Oh, um yeah I like to do that when I have to time, I haven't done it in a while though." Nick nodded as though he understood completely.

"I also do not get to spend as much time doing that as I would like. If you would like after breakfast I have some things that you may enjoy looking at."

"Oh, really?"

"He's talking about his workshop," Jack said, not seeming too thrilled by the idea.

"I think it's a wonderful idea dear, I'm sure Hiccup would love a quick tour." Anna gave Nick a pointed look.

"Hmm, oh yes yes." Nick agreed to some agreement that Hiccup was not aware of and Jack grew visibly less annoyed by the prospect.

"That sounds like fun Mr. North." Hiccup said, not sure what else to say. The awkwardness at the start of breakfast was forgotten as the conversation turned to plans for the day and the rest of the week. Nick and Anna would be busy with work related things for most of it and Jack told them he planned to spend the evenings at Hiccup's if his father was ok with it. Hiccup said he'd have to ask, but he didn't think it would be a problem, after all, his dad had basically given Jack an open invitation to the house. Pitch told the table that he would be in court for most of the week as well, and Aster attempted several suggestive remarks throughout the meal that made Hiccup blush and, from the grunts of pain that cut them off early each time, earned him an under the table kick from Pitch for each, though Hiccup never saw any indication of such from Pitch himself. Finally, after they had all cleared their plates and the meal had been taken away Nick stood.

"Alright Hiccup, are you ready?" Hiccup stood and nodded. He started to follow Nick from the room when he turned back to Jack who hadn't moved.

"Aren't you coming?"

"Tour dad's workshop for the thousandth time? No thanks. I'm sure you two will have plenty to talk about in there, just text me when you're done and I'll come meet you."

"Oh, uh, alright." Hiccup was suddenly a lot more nervous about this tour, now that he would be spending it alone with Nick. Not that the man had ever done anything to make him uncomfortable, quite the opposite in fact. He really shouldn't be nervous right but he'd only met Nick yesterday and he was the father of his boyfriend and thanks to Jack's slip he at least had an idea what they'd been up to last night and- Hiccup took a deep breath and tried to calm his racing thoughts. He needed to relax and just try and make the best of the situation. Once he decided on that it was easier for him to walk calmly behind the large man as he guided him through the house which Hiccup also decided he'd never be able to navigate without a map. He also decided that Jack was a grade A ass for abandoning him like this, even if Nick had managed to relax him even more by striking up a conversation about the various things that Hiccup had worked on during his various spurts of tinkering inspiration.

As soon as the kitchen door closed behind Hiccup Jack rounded on Aster "I cannot believe you, no strike that I'm actually not surprised in the slightest that you'd be such a dick."

"Language Jack," Anna cut in "He's right though Aster, you were being a dick."

"I was just joke'n with 'im." Aster said defensively.

"I know that, but Hiccup's not used to you yet, and sometimes when you're joking you-"

"-Think you're being funny when you're really just being a giant dick?" Jack interjected.

"They are right, you need to leave that poor boy alone. It's painfully clear how hard all of this is for him. Your ribbing is not going to help him be more comfortable here or in his own skin." Pitch added, drawing surprised looks from everyone at the table.

"Uh, thanks Pitch." Jack said, looking at the older man with suspicious gratitude.

"Yeah, thanks Koz." Aster said sarcastically and then, rubbing his leg "And thanks for the bruises."

"Oh please, you do not bruise that easily. And You," Pitch rounded on Jack "Shouldn't have sent him off alone with Nick like that."

"Oh come one, it's just touring Dad's workshop. It's not like I'd be any fun doing that, plus its dad, I can't think of anybody less intimidating when he wasn't to be."

"That's beside the point. Did you even see the poor boys face when you said you'd be abandoning him? He was clearly trying not to show how scared he was at the idea."

"Why would he be scared? It's not like any of us have done anything to justify him being scared, his dad's not here to catch us, what's there to be scared of?" Pitch pinched the bridge of his nose and closed his eyes for a moment before speaking.

"Do you know the key to being a good liability resolution lawyer, Jack? Putting yourself in the mind of the plaintiff. Figure out what it is they want then giving it to them. It's the same for a relationship. Try to think about this from Hiccup's perspective. He's in a strange house with people he just recently met with a boy whom he has truly only known for a short time whom he also, apparently, likes quite a bit. That situation alone is enough to make a person nervous, not throw in the fact that, from what I've been able to gather, his father would be non-to happy to discover the extent of your 'friendship'. You and Aster both have had Anna and Nick raising you for years, you've never had to live in fear that someone that you love and respect will hate you because of something can't control. You've never had to live with the constant fear that you'll say something or do something that tips your hand, that you'll reveal yourself and have your whole world fall apart in an afternoon. It's hard to turn that off, even if you are in a place where you don't need to worry. And I can only imagine what it would be like going through that when you are not a grown adult with a job and no reliance on your family nor real close bond with them. The whole situation is probably terrifying for Hiccup."

The kitchen was silent as Pitch spoke. Jack sometimes forgot just how observant Pitch could be and now he felt properly ashamed that he'd sent Hiccup off on his own. "Thanks."

"Figure out what he want's, then give it to him." Pitch repeated

pointedly.

"I don't know, you don't do a very good job of giving me what I want." Aster snipped.

"You didn't seem to have any complaints about what I was giving you last night." Pitch replied without missing a beat.

"Boys, please." Anna half said, half sighed.

It was about an hour later, during which Jack helped clean away the breakfast mess and endured a seemingly endless stream of questions and inuendoes about his activities the previous evening from Aster who seemed to have been given free reign now that Hiccup was out of the room, when Jack received a text from Hiccup.

Hiccup: Done with the tour, your dad's workshop is amazing!

Smiling to himself Jack made his way toward his dad's workshop on the first floor until he ran into his dad and Hiccup, apparently on their way back to the kitchen.

"Hey, you enjoyed the tour then I take it?"

"Yeah, it was pretty awesome. Your dad said that he could help me make a couple replacement parts for some of my older models with his 3D printer and maybe even design some of my own!" Hiccup was practically bouncing with excitement as he walked over to Jack and gave him a peck on the cheek before seemingly remembering he was in front of Nick and blushing. All in all, it was one of the cutest things Jack had ever seen and he hugged the freckled teen tight and returned the kiss.

"Glad you had a good time."

"We had very good time. Remember Hiccup, next time you come over for weekend bring broken models and we will work on replacements."

"That would be awesome Mr. N-er, Nick."

Nick patted Hiccup on the back as he headed down the hallway "I have conference call to prepare for, it was a pleasure to meet you Hiccup. I hope you come back soon. I'm glad Jack has found such nice boy."

"Uhh, thanks." Hiccup stammered, his face flushing bright red. Jack tried to keep himself from laughing, he too was glad he'd found such nice boy.

"Sorry I skipped the workshop." Jack said once Nick had gone and he and Hiccup were heading back toward his room.

"It's alright, like you said I'm sure you've done it a hundred times. I doubt it would have been much fun for you."

"No, it was a dick move and I'm sorry." Hiccup hesitated for a moment then nodded in agreement.

"It was kinda a dick move."

"Besides, I would have had fun cause I would have been with you."

"That was so incredibly sappy." Hiccup snarked, but he couldn't keep the broad smile off his face.

"It's my specialty." Jack said, spinning Hiccup toward him for a quick kiss.

"I've noticed." Hiccup laughed, returning the kiss. "I am really excited about the 3D printer though, I've like always wanted one but never been able to justify the cost."

"Dad uses it all the time when he's working of prototyping stuff. Prints it out to see how things all fit together before going through the trouble of fabricating a prototype."

They continued to talk about Hiccup's plan for the 3D printer until they reached Jack's room where they settled down onto the couch and held a rematch for the previous evening. After a bit Jack challenged Hiccup to a game of strip-Smash-Brothers which the freckled teen proceeded to win quite handily because he was cheap and picked Pikachu. Soon Jack found himself removing his underwear while Hiccup had only lost his socks and shirt. Of course at that point Hiccup's clothes didn't remain on for much longer and, before long they found themselves in the shower after an encore of that morning. After a much longer shower than they'd had that morning they toweled off and spread out on the couch to finish air drying. Jack was in the middle of counting Hiccup's freckles, which adorably covered essentially his entire body, when he shifted and Jack noticed a thoughtful look on his face.

"Watcha thinking about?" Jack asked, giving up on his impossible task.

"Hmm? I'm just thinking about how incredible it is that I'm lying here right now."

"You mean like here with me? Or the fact that you're naked?" Jack teased, ignoring the or because you could have been dead right now that jumped into his mind. He pushed that unpleasant thought away as Hiccup responded.

"All of it I guess? I mean-" Hiccup sighed in a lost for words and contented kind of way "just that I'm lying here with you, and I'm incredibly happy, and yes I'm naked but I'm not feeling all self-conscious like I normally would." Jack had to admit that he was kinda surprised about that too. For someone as self-conscious as Hiccup was Jack was surprised that he'd been so at ease with being naked as much as he had, not that Jack was complaining mind you. Hiccup was quite attractive as far as Jack was concerned.

"I do seem to remember that you were one of the boys that didn't never showered after gym during that one class we shared last year." Hiccup looked away but nodded.

"Yeah. Not that I really needed to, I kinda did my best to avoid participating as much as I could. But yeah, the idea of, of being naked in front of all those people absolutely terrified me. That and the idea of getting a boner in the shower." Jack laughed at

that.

"That happened to me like five times freshmen year."

"What? No way, what the hell happened?"

"Nothing really. I made a couple jokes. Asked the guy who was pointing it out if he wanted to take care of it for me, that shut him up pretty quick." Hiccup shook his head and laughed.

"I can totally see you doing that. I think I could have died from embarrassment right there. Just melted into a puddle and gone down the drain." Jack chuckled and the conversation lulled. He's just started counting Hiccup's freckles again when Hiccup spoke again. "It's not like that with you though for some reason. It just feels more comfortable, more safe with you I guess." Smiling, Jack leaned over and drew Hiccup into a deep kiss and soon the couple was in danger of needing another shower.

In what seemed like no time Jack's phone buzzed with a message from Aster saying to get ready to bring Hiccup home. They hadn't realized until then that it was approaching nine in the evening. Getting dressed quickly they gathered Hiccup's bags and headed down. Anna was there to see Hiccup off with a hug which he returned after a moment's hesitation and an invitation to come back and visit next weekend, which he said he'd love to accept if his father said it was ok. Pitch was there to and said goodbye to Hiccup with a handshake and an apology for Aster's 'utterly juvenile behavior' which earned a chuckle from Jack and Hiccup and a middle finger from Aster. The ride to Hiccup's house went by much faster than Jack would have liked and before he knew it they were pulling up in front of it. Aster got out and knelt down to tie his shoe which Jack recognized as a surprisingly tactful way of giving him and Hiccup a moment of privacy to say goodbye. He pulled Hiccup and a hug which turned into a kiss which he broke off after a moment, sensing that Hiccup's usual nerves had returned with his return home.

"I had a really great time with you Hiccup, like a really good time." Jack said seriously, without a hint of innuendo, at least he hoped he did.

"Me too, I lovvvvve-d spendingtheweekendwithyou." Hiccup said, seemingly suddenly flustered. Hiccup cocked an eyebrow in confusion at Hiccup's suddenly strange behavior. What on earth had gotten into him?

"I loved it too." He said "Tomorrow is going to suck not being able to see you."

"I'll see you on Monday, I'm sure you can make it that long."

"I don't know, I may wither away without your touch." Jack said over dramatically.

"Oh please." Hiccup scoffed. He leaned in and Jack gave him one last quick kiss. "Bye."

"Bye." With that, Hiccup opened the door, slid out of the car and headed to his house.

Oh my god oh my god oh my god Hiccup thought as he walked up the path to his front door. He'd nearly just told Jack 'I love you.' What the hell had gotten into him? He'd known the guy for less than a month?! Well at least he'd caught himself. Knowing his luck he'd let that slip out and scare Jack away. Luckily he was interrupted from his thoughts as he unlocked the door, turned to wave at Aster who waved back and started to drive away, and headed into the house.

"Welcome back. How was your weekend?" his Father asked as he locked the door and took his shoes off.

"It was fun," Hiccup said, hoping his face didn't show any guilt as he said "he played watched a movie with Jack's parents and then played a some video games, he's got quite the collection."

"Sound like you had a good time. If not terribly productive." Stoick said in a tone that made it clear he was joking.

"Oh, and his dad has a 3D printer that he says I can use to try and make a couple replacements for some of the pieces I'm missing from some of my older models."

"Really? How would you even do that?"

"Well, you design the piece on the computer and then the printer prints it just like paper except instead of ink it uses plastic to crate a 3D model."

"Well, that sound just up your ally." Hiccup nodded and went to head toward his room. "You going to bed already?"

"No, but I wanna get started on my homework since I haven't yet. I'll come out and say goodnight when I actually go to bed."

"Ah, alright, well good job being responsible." He said with a chuckle.

"Oh, dad?" Hiccup turned around to ask as he reached his door.

"Hmm?"

"Can Jack come over after school on Monday?"

"I don't see anything wrong with that."

"Thanks!" His father nodded and waved it off as nothing.

"Sure. I'm glad you're spending so much time with friends." Stoick smiled at him and Hiccup smiled back, hoping once again that the guilt he was feeling wasn't showing on his face.

****Alright, hope you enjoyed that! Now for that house cleaning stuff I mentioned up top. First off, this chapter is dedicated to ESPhoenix, who's, shall I say persistent, comments gave me those warm fuzzies I needed to finish this chapter which has been sitting in various stages of completion for months now! So yay her! Now on to the reason it was sitting so long in various stages of completion. As most of you know at this point I'm in college. Well, if everything goes as planned, I'll be graduating at the beginning of this coming May,**

which means last semester and this semester have been crazy busy for me, as has this winter break preparing for next semester. With five upper division classes and preparations for graduation, I haven't had a lot of time to write, and what time I have had has been taken up with something else, which brings me to my next thing. **

**I'm writing a book! Like, an honest to goodness novel with fantasy adventures and magic and of course gay boys! I can't say a lot about it right now except that, again, if everything goes as planned it should be ready for distribution around November. Not completely sure how I'll be distributing it but I know there will be an easy option for any of my fans here (god I feel so pretentious saying that!) who want to read it. More on that in the months to come. **

**My final point is that, despite any brakes or (way to god damned) long absences, I *will not* abandon this story. You have my word on that. If you are reading this and have stuck with me this long, well quite frankly you deserve a finished story damn it, and you will get one! **

So yeah, that's what's been up with me the last few months. Thank you all so much for taking the time to read this, and of course** my stories. Thanks everyone for the kind comments and reviews and all that great stuff that gives me the warm fuzzies! I really do love you all!**

End
file.